

**THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
AT CHAPEL HILL**



**THE COLLECTION OF
NORTH CAROLINIANA**

C286.2

A24s

v. 1-2

1940-1941

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL



00043581757

FOR USE ONLY IN
THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

PLEASE NOTE: The following issues of
THE ADVANCED QUARTERLY
are missing: vol.1, no.3
and vol.2, no.4.

PA
TYP
SL

H
O
R
I
Z
O
N
T

Cp 2862

CAROLINA ROOM

The Advanced Quarterly



For Use By

ADULT

and

YOUNG

PEOPLE'S

Classes



PUBLISHED BY
Free Will Baptist Press
AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

C286.2
A245
v. 1-2
1940-1941

THE ADVANCED QUARTERLY

for

Young People and Adults

REV. R. B. SPENCER -----Editor

Volume I First Quarter 1940
January-February-March

CONTENTS

PAGE

1. January 7: The Christian's Confession of Faith	3
2. January 14: The Problem of Forgiveness	9
3. January 21: A New Standard of Greatness	14
4. January 28: Jesus Proclaiming Dramatically His Messiahship	19
5. February 4: Holding Life Sacred	23
6. February 11: The Perils of Rejecting Christ	27
7. February 18: Good Citizens and Good Neighbors	32
8. February 25: Stewards in the Kingdom	36
9. March 3: In the Upper Room	41
10. March 10: Gethsemane: Triumph Through Surrender	46
11. March 17: Calvary: Triumph Through Sacrifice	51
12. March 24: The Sepulchre: Triumph over Death (Easter)	57
13. March 31: The Continuing Task	59

Published Quarterly by the Free Will Baptist Press, Ayden, North Carolina.

Price 8 cents per copy ----- 32 cents per year

Application for entry as second-class matter is pending.

FOREWORD

The Need

For sometime, Sunday-school teachers and superintendents, ministers and lay-workers of our churches have felt the need of a Young People's and Adult-class quarterly for our Sunday Schools. The truth is, in a great many schools today the Adult classes have been using the Senior-class quarterly, while in others, scripture readings of selected chapters from the Bible have been used with class comments from the teacher and students. Still in other schools the young people above the Senior age, and the adults constitute the same class. Under such arrangements as these, the work has not produced the best results. In fact, the lesson materials and the methods used in these combinations have not been satisfactory on the whole to these mixed groups. What has been needed is a Young People's and Adult advanced quarterly for the age groups ranging from 18 to 24 years old and up, as other denominations are using with great success.

In view of these facts, the Free Will Baptist Press at Ayden, North Carolina, has made it possible, beginning with this quarter, for this Adult and Young People's quarterly to be published to meet the long felt need. It will be known as the Advanced-class quarterly. It is hoped, therefore, that it will prove to be satisfactory and greatly beneficial to the superintendents, teachers and students of our Sunday Schools.

The Aim

Following the statements given above, we are setting forth herewith the following aims of this Advanced-class quarterly: namely, (1) to give a fuller treatment of the lesson than is usually given in the average Senior-class quarterly for seniors; (2) to develop each lesson in such a way as to lead, as far as possible, the student to correlate and apply the leading scriptural truths to present-day life; and (3) to give parallel reference materials and scripture readings for individual home-study, and class discussions, as the teacher and students may desire for further study and a greater appreciation of God's Word.

R. B. SPENCER.

The Christian's Confession of Faith

(Matthew 16: 13-28)

Golden Text: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Matthew 16: 16.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 16: 13-24

(Authorized Version)

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatso-

ever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: It was in the third period of the Galilean ministry, in autumn of A. D. 29.

Place: In the northern part of Galilee, near Caesarea Philippi, and in the southern foot hills of Mount Hermon.

Persons: Jesus and his disciples.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mark 8:27-38.

T.—Luke 9:18-27.

W.—Leviticus 4:5.

T.—2 Samuel 1:14; 19:21.

F.—Psalm 2:1-12.

S.—Daniel 9:20-27.

S.—1 Peter 2:3-8.

THE INTRODUCTION

The teaching as set forth in this lesson

occurred in the northern part of Galilee, and near Caesarea Philippi on the southern foot hills of Mount Hermon. In this teaching Jesus was conversing with his disciples concerning himself and his Church. The student will note that this first lesson of the quarter is one of the most important studies of Christ and his Church. Therefore, he is urged to study carefully each topic in the lesson.

I. THE DISCIPLES TELL WHAT MEN AND WHAT THEY THINK OF CHRIST (Matt. 16: 13-16)

Jesus addressed to his disciples these words: **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?** What opinions do men hold regarding me? Do they claim me as the Messiah? In asking this question, Jesus had reference to the people in general, not to the scribes and Pharisees, nor to any particular class. Neither did he ask the question because he did not know what people think and say, for he does know their thoughts; but to impress upon his disciples the necessity of their careful consideration of other people's views of him. That is to say, How had men been talking concerning his miracles? What had they been saying about his teachings and public acts? Since the people in general conversed freely with the disciples at different times, and on different occasions, they had had opportunity to express to the disciples the views which men held of Jesus. Therefore, the disciples were in a position to answer the question in a simple and straight-forward manner. It was a good method to draw out the disciples for comment and discussion on the people's views of Christ.

The disciples made quick reply to the question in these words: **Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.** These opinions had been expressed by the people themselves, and in the presence of the disciples; some saying one thing and some another. These were the sentiments of men among the common people, and not necessarily the views of his enemies. They were false opinions, nevertheless, and represented the wrong conceptions of the Messiah. They might have known he was not one of the prophets who had lived centuries before his day, and who had prophesied of his later coming into the world as King. John

the Baptist had come as the forerunner of Christ, announcing that he was to prepare the way of the Lord; and that the people should follow the promised Messiah. But king Herod had just recently put John the Baptist to death. The people emphatically recognized Jesus as a man who could perform great things and could speak wonderful truths. They supposed him to be one who had come from the dead. His teachings and performance of miracles showed that he was more than an ordinary person. They counted him great, therefore, and thought of him as one of the prophets.

But Jesus directed his second question to the disciples for their personal opinions of him in these words: **But whom say ye that I am?** What do you think of me? Now that you have been my followers these two and one-half years, what do you say of me? Other men have paid high tribute to me as a great man, saying that I am one of the prophets. Will you now state your opinions? This was a fine method of approach which Jesus used to see what their answers would be. They had given the answers of men, but now they must give theirs. What would they say of him after having had more than two years of direct contact and association with him. This was a vital question. It is, indeed, an important question today for everyone. They had been in an intimate position to learn more of him than other men had been and thus better able to give account of him as the Christ.

Simon Peter gave the answer in these positive words: **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.** You are more than a prophet, priest or earthly king; you are the promised Messiah! Peter had spoken for the group without wavering. During the time they had been with him, Jesus had taught them the truths of the Gospel. They had had opportunity to know, without question, that the One whom they had been following was the

Son of the living God. They had lived with him, labored with him, and had learned to love him. He was precious to them. Hence, they had reasons to believe they were right in their answer. We know you are the Christ. Close and personal relationships with noble characters give intimate knowledge of their standing and worth to mankind. Thus, the answer given attested to the fact that he was the Messiah. For the use of this word, note the following quotation:

"The word 'Messiah' came to be used for that conception of a person who should be the deliverer of the Jews, and even still more widely, a redeemer. Jesus completed the threefold ministry of the Messiah as the prophet who reveals, the priest who offers and intercedes, and the King who rules. The offices spring from his person and his work."—L. D. Bevan, in *Peloubet's Notes*.

FOR DISCUSSION: Why did Jesus ask the question, *Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?* Was Peter's answer, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*, spoken as the great confession of the disciples?

II. THE REVELATION CONCERNING CHRIST'S CHURCH

(Matt. 16: 17-20)

Note first, Christ commended in verse seventeen Peter for his correct answer. How had he obtained this answer? Jesus said, *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven*. This revelation came not by Peter's own will or reasoning, nor by education or teachings of other men. Men with greater knowledge of material things than Simon Peter possessed had not this revelation, but they named Christ as one of the prophets. It took more than human knowledge of man's achievements through the past ages, or of the physical features of the earth for Peter to answer this question in the affirmative. *Flesh and blood, the natural*

man, could not by force of will obtain this revelation. However, Peter and the other disciples had been, as close followers, with Jesus for two and a half years. During this time, they had been taught by him; they had witnessed his miracles performed; and had the opportunity of acquiring first-hand knowledge of Jesus the man, as well as drinking deeply of his spiritual values. But human knowledge is one thing, and divine revelation is another. Had it been the fact that Peter's two and a half years with him had given Peter this knowledge, Christ would have said so. Men may study God's word, and know much of its teachings, and yet fail to receive the divine revelation. The Christian religion is a revealed religion to all who will seek diligently of God.

Note in the next place, Christ's concluding statement, **but my Father which is in heaven**. All divine revelation is of God. The revealing of the blessed Messiah to us is God's good pleasure to give at our asking. The Father had revealed Christ to Peter and the other disciples. Such a revelation came, doubtless, after the disciples had obtained an ever deepening and broadening knowledge of him during the two and a half years of service with him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2: 14). Here is the truth in a nutshell: God had revealed his only begotten Son to the disciples. What a great revelation and a wonderful confession!

In the next verse, the eighteenth, we have three distinct thoughts; namely, *thou art Peter, . . . upon this rock I will build my church, . . . the gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail against it*. Christ said, *Thou art Peter*. This is the name which Jesus gave him when Peter left his occupation of fishing to follow him, (John 1:41). The word means rock.

In substance, "What the Lord said was this 'Thou art *Petos*'— a fragment of rock—'and upon this rock'—*petra*—I will found my church' "—**Dr. C. I. Scofield, in Peloubet's Notes.** In this lesson thus far, Peter had been the chief spokesman for the other disciples. It did not mean, on the other hand, that what Christ had said to him did not apply to the other followers, for it did. The questions and answers concerned all of them. And so, they concern men today. What think ye of Christ?

Now, note the second thought: **and upon this rock I will build my church.** This is one of the most difficult passages found in the new Testament. Noted Bible scholars have given different explanations of, and hold to different opinions concerning the meaning which Christ meant to convey. Some reason thus: Peter being the disciple through whom the first stones of the church were laid, both through Jewish converts (Acts II), and through Gentile converts (Acts X) by his preaching, he might be said to be the rock on which it was built. But it does not seem reasonable to consider a man, who lays the first stones of a building, the foundation on which it is built. It would seem rather that he is a contributor, not the foundation. Others take the view that by **this rock**, Jesus referred to himself. **I will build my church upon the sure foundation.** Consequently, this point of view must be explained by those scriptures which speak of Christ as the only Foundation. For which explanations, see I Corinthians 3:11; and 1 Peter 2:6. It is upon these and other parallel scriptures that this group base their views as to what Christ meant by **this rock**. A third view is taken by those who understand by **this rock**, Jesus meant Peter's confession of faith in the Son of God, which the other disciples concurred with him in his answer. Moreover, without this great faith, the Church of Christ would come to naught. Whatever view

students may hold, it is certain that Christ is the Chief Corner-stone; his Church, the bride; and all true Christians, members of this church.

We now come to the third thought: **The gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail against it.** Here Jesus definitely promises to preserve his church. He conveys in this statement the thought that the church has enemies, which we know to be true, and which oppose his Church at all times; and seek ever to destroy or overthrow it. But he assured the disciples that Satan and all his forces would not prevail against it. Thus, he conveyed the idea that his Church would endure to the end; not having reference to any particular denomination or church leaders, for often they do err and fall away. He was positive that the Christian religion would never fail, and that sin and Satan would not overcome it.

Note: For those who would desire some light on the words: hell, Hades, Sheol; we refer them to the following references, as space will not permit of a lengthy discussion here: **Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 14:13; Acts 2:31; 1 Corinthians 15:55; Revelation 20:13.** Also study **Matthew 11:23; Luke 16:23; 2 Peter 2:4.**)

Verse nineteen contains also thoughts difficult to explain. **I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom.** Literally speaking, keys are the means of opening entrances to, and closing exits from a building. We believe Jesus meant here the investment of his Word to Peter and the disciples, and other successors with the power to promulgate the Gospel truths wherever they should go. As keys to a building open one to the valuable possessions contained therein, so may we liken the gospel keys as the fundamental teachings of Christ for the redemption of mankind. We note that a little later on Peter opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 10:28). The worth of

keys lies in the fact that they admit a person to valuables locked within treasury houses. So, the gospel truths which Jesus had been teaching the disciples for two and a half years were given to the disciples as keys to open up Christ's teachings to mankind, and to win people to Jesus.

FOR DISCUSSION: What is the difference between divine revelation and human knowledge? Permit a member of the class to give his opinion of how the two and a half years of service with Jesus gave his disciples a close insight of his divinity. Call for opinions on: (1) upon this rock I will build my church; (2) the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; (3) the keys of the kingdom.

III. CHRIST REVEALING HIS APPROACHING DEATH (Matthew 16: 21-23)

From that time, when the disciples had made full confession of Christ as God's only begotten Son, Jesus began to make known to them that he must suffer. It marks a new period in the life of Christ. "From this time Jesus devotes himself chiefly to teaching his disciples and preparing them for the crisis. After the revelation of verses 16-19, they should be able to bear the explicit intimation of his Passion."—Edward E. Anderson, in Peloubet's Notes. They had had two years and a half to become established in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, therefore, they were well grounded in the belief that he was the Son of God. Men do not know when or how they shall die, but Jesus knew all the circumstances incident upon his death. He must now lead his disciples into the light of his sufferings in Jerusalem. He knew the nature of the sufferings that he was to endure, and the different groups of men who would put him to death. All authority—the elders, chief priests, and scribes—were against him. These groups looked not to justice in his case, but to

his certain death. Likewise today, men often fail to get justice meted out to them at the hands of the courts.

Simon Peter addressed him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee.* Could Peter believe it! Were not the other disciples also astounded and made to wonder at Christ's statements here? Surely all of them thought these things should not come upon their Lord. But thinking in the terms of men, Peter was greatly moved over the thought of his Master having to be put to shame, suffer pain, and then be put to death. It is a truth, people hate to see noble men and women suffer unjust persecutions, and meet their death ignominiously.

Jesus turned to Peter with this bitter reprimand: *Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.* These were severe words to Peter, but he must know Christ's viewpoint on the matter. Peter must not run counter to God's will; that is to say, pay attention to what men say, and be a stumbling block to the cause of Christianity; but mind his Christian duty and take seriously what Jesus had to say. Peter's statement greatly displeased Christ concerning his sufferings and death, as many today say harsh things against the Just One who is always deeply grieved at their bitter words. The Lord justly rebuked Peter for his wicked suggestion just as a man's conscience today stings him severely when he becomes greatly penitent over some grievous sin committed.

FOR DISCUSSION: Did Peter mean to be disrespectful to Christ in verse twenty-two, or was he overcome with wonder and abasement at the words of Jesus? Was Christ's sharp rebuke to Peter meant to express his resentment only, or was it to chasten Peter also for his contradiction of the Lord's statement?

IV. HOW DISCIPLES OF CHRIST ARE TO LIVE (Matthew 16: 24-26)

Strictly speaking, the Christian life is a life of self-denial of those things which are sinful in the sight of God. The person who has accepted Christ as his Lord and Master must be willing to deny himself of sinful things. Jesus said, **If any man will come after me.** There is nothing compulsory in this statement of Jesus concerning our following him. But, when men have definitely decided to take Jesus as their Lord and Master, and seek to follow him, they then are to do certain things to become true followers of Christ. What is required for a person to be a true disciple of Christ? Is it not (1) believing on him with one's whole heart; (2) accepting him as one's personal Saviour; and (3) living daily the true Christian life, and rendering real Christian service to one's fellow-man? Thus the true disciple is one who follows Christ in duty, service and faithfulness—a true soldier of the cross. Hence, all Christians must deny themselves of sinful things which are contrary to the law of Christ. It is the **straight gate and the narrow way**, but the true child of God gets joy from close fellowship with the Lord. Rightly has the Psalmist said, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, . . . But his delight is in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 1: 1, 2).

Not only must the Christian live a life of self-denial before the Lord, but he is to take up his cross. Jesus bore his cross of persecutions and sufferings before his death, and was made to bear the actual wooden cross part of the way upon which he was hanged, as he was on his way to Calvary. Cross-bearing is essential for the children of God. It is inescapable, and each Christian has his share to bear. Whenever one endures hardships for Christ's sake; bears patiently his physical sufferings and mental

anxieties; endures persecutions for righteousness' sake; and takes the censure, criticisms and the backbitings of his fellow-man in the spirit of love, he can be recognized as a true cross-bearer. It is a daily cross which the Christian must bear to be able to follow Jesus in the straight and narrow way.

Along with these duties of self-denial and suffering for Christ, He gave us some fine lessons in verse twenty-five to follow. Jesus said, **Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.** The emphasis here is on the saving and the losing of life. Matthew Henry's Commentary, volume five, Matthew to John, gives the following explanation to this verse:

"Whosoever will save his life, by denying Christ, shall lose it: and whosoever is content to lose his life, for owning Christ, shall save it."

If a man shall seek to save his life in this world by living in sin for pleasure and profit, he will lose it in the next by denying the Christ. The earthly life here is of the clay, but the heavenly life above is of the spirit. It is a truth, living the earthly life through sinful pleasures, and gainful pursuits does not always mean the saving of one's life in the flesh. But living the cross-bearing life for Jesus does mean finding life in heaven. Christ made this plain to his disciples. The Christian today is required to do no less. What Jesus was emphasizing here more than anything else was the human soul. For, in verse twenty-six, he said, **What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.** Here, again, the emphasis is laid; namely, gaining great earthly possessions at the expense of losing one's soul; or preferring wealth and pleasures of this life as an exchange for the worth of his soul in heaven. The teaching here is: men lose eternal life and the joys of heaven

when they center their thoughts and affections on the material and sinful things of the world, and leave Christ and righteousness out of their lives. They may be rewarded here from their fleshly viewpoints, but Christ shall come to reward all according to their works, whether they were good or bad.

FOR DISCUSSION: Ask a member of

the class to give his opinion of what constitutes (1) self denial; (2) bearing one's cross; (3) saving and losing one's life.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Christ Foretelling His Return—Matthew 16:27, 28; 17:1-8; Mark 8:38; 9:1-8; Luke 9:26-36; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 22:16; Zechariah 14:5.

LESSON II

JANUARY 14, 1940

The Problem of Forgiveness

(Matthew 18: 15— 19: 30)

Golden Text: Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Matthew 6: 12.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 18: 21-35

(Authorized Version)

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents:

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants which

owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Christ gave the teachings in chapter eighteen in the autumn of A. D. 29. All that is recorded in chapter nineteen occurred in February and March of the following year, A. D. 30.

Place: Jesus gave all the teachings here recorded in chapter eighteen in Capernaum. The nineteenth chapter opens in Galilee, but the events of the rest of the chapter are in Perea.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Luke 17:3; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20.

T.—John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1.

W.—1 Tim. 5:19; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14.

T.—Mark 11:25; Colossians 3:13.

F.—2 Kings 4:1; Nehemiah 5:8.

S.—Matthew 6:12, 14.

S.—James 2:13.

THE INTRODUCTION

As the student is about to enter upon the study of this lesson, we direct his mind to the following points: (1) note how the erring or offending brother should be treated; (2) what Christ taught concerning forgiveness; (3) what Christ had to say about divorce; and (4) his love for little children. A careful study of these truths as laid down by Christ in his teaching to his disciples will enable the Bible student to more fully appreciate the correct way he should deal with his fellow-man.

I. THE WAY TO DEAL WITH ONE WHO HAS WRONGED US (Matthew 18:15-18)

This lesson begins with the problem of how we are to deal with a brother who has wronged us. Offences committed against us by an erring brother are usually personal, and may become public scandals as well as private grievances. In the case of personal injuries, it may be quarrels among Christians over matters that do offend and grieve their hearts concerning some church affairs. Or it may be grievances outside the church. In such cases, Christ's rule is **Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.** We are to go to the brother in the spirit of Christ, and talk over the grievance brother with brother—

in the Christian way. But we are not to hold malice and hate our brother in our hearts, nor to deal with him in a way as to bring about greater offense between us. By sane reasoning and right considerations of the matter the offended brother will most likely win over the erring brother with penitence and obtain his request for pardon. When this method proves satisfactory and the two brothers become good friends again, both will hold thereafter higher regards for each other.

On the other hand, **If he will not hear thee**; if he will not own his fault; if he will not come to a satisfactory agreement between you and himself; then the second method is prescribed by Jesus. Bring with you one or two witnesses to the offending brother; let them hear the case between you and him; and then see if a reconciliation, or a peaceful satisfaction can be obtained. With these witnesses present to establish or certify to what takes place, and also to assist in reasoning the case through on the basis of brotherly kindness and good will, he will be the more likely to hearken unto them, and agree to come to a peaceful and brotherly settlement of the matter. But if he will not say, "I am sorry, I repent for what I have done to my brother, I will never beg his pardon," then the words of reason will be established between the witnesses of his obstinate disposition.

The third method, **If he shall neglect to hear them**, is to bring the matter before the church for settlement. Thus it is implied, though not stated here, that the offending brother is to be brought before the church for trial. Now, if the brother still refuses to act as a Christian;

that is, remains impenitent and not willing to confess his wrong, and make the matter right, then he is no longer considered a member of the church. **Let him be unto thee as an heathen man.** He is not worthy of the Christian fellowship with the brethren.

Following these three methods of dealing with an offending brother in the church, Christ spoke these words: **Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.** This is a re-emphasis of the same truth which Christ had just uttered to his disciples in chapter 16, verse 19. It is true the church is Christ's only institution on earth, and when his followers can, in the spirit of meekness and love, win an erring brother back to the right fellowship, one brother with another, for the cause of righteousness, then it may be said they have bound that brother to his brother, and to the church. On the other hand, if they have failed to lead him to act in the Christ-like way, and to follow Jesus according to the inspired word of God, then they shall have to let him go his way as an heathen man. He is loosed on earth, going his own way, without Christ and the fellowship of God's children. Therefore, it is plain that we are to try to win our brother in error back to right relationship, brother with brother, and to the Lord.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: When and how should an offending brother be dealt with in the light of Christianity? Should the church today use these methods as laid down by Christ to set right offending members of the church?

II. CHRIST'S LAW OF FORGIVENESS AMONG CHRISTIANS (Matthew 18: 21-35)

One of the great teachings of Christ is the spirit of forgiveness. In fact, Christ had before taught his disciples this lesson, and Peter remembered it.

Thus, he asks this question: **How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?** Peter recognized the fact that he should forgive those who trespass against him. But his question was, How often, how many times? Should he forgive an offending brother seven times, and no more? At least Peter thought there was a limit to forgiving one who had sinned against him. Since the number "seven" appears as a sacred number in the Bible, perhaps Peter thought that that would be a sufficient number of times for one to forgive an offending person. But Jesus replied: **I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.** Relative to this answer, Peloubet's Notes give this quotation: "It is not clear whether this idiom means seventy-seven, or, as the Revised Version has it, seventy times seven. But it really makes little difference, because Jesus clearly means unlimited forgiveness in either case."—A. T. Robertson. Jesus prayed while on the cross at Calvary to God for those who were crucifying him. Even in the moments of his bitter agony he could utter the forgiving spirit. Men are to forgive their fellow-men for sins committed against them. Following this answer to Peter, Jesus gave a further discourse of forgiveness by way of a parable. He likened the kingdom of heaven, in verses 23 to 35, unto a certain king reckoning with his servants. Christ gave many parables as means by which to explain Christian doctrines and to show Christian duties. There are in this parable three things for us to consider; namely, (1) the lord's clemency to his servant; (2) the servant's hard-heartedness toward his fellow-servant; and (3) the master's just resentment of the cruelty which his servant had manifested toward his fellow-servant.

Let us now study the lord's clemency. A talent was six thousand, *denarii*, or about a thousand dollars. Thus the ser-

vant owed his lord ten thousand times this amount which would equal about ten or twelve million dollars in American money. But he could not pay his lord as he did not have the money with which to pay him. Thereupon, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The sale of the debtor's wife and children rested on the assumption that they were part of his property. This was the theory and practice of the Roman law. Read Leviticus 25: 39 and 41, which shows that it was allowed under the Mosaic law for an insolvent debtor to be sold, and also his family, for debts. For further references, read 2 Kings 4:1; Nehemiah 5:5; Isaiah 50:1; 58:6; and Jeremiah 34:8-11. This servant had contracted this debt by wastefulness, carelessness, or high living, and had not been caretaking with his lord's money. He was not a good steward, as some men today are not trustworthy to manage other men's business.

Now, when he saw that his lord was going to sell him and his family to settle the debt, he plead for patience and mercy, and promised to pay all of the debt. But his lord knew the debt was too great for him to pay. His sins were many, they had found him out; so he begged for clemency. Whereupon, his lord was moved with compassion for him, released him, and forgave him the debt. Though our sins be many, God will forgive them if we will turn to him for mercy and pardon. The vilest of sinners will be healed and their lives made clean when they turn to Jesus, and beg pardon and seek his saving grace.

But there enters here another consideration of this servant whom his lord had just forgiven. This servant had a fellow-servant who owed him a hundred shillings. Rendered in our money today, this sum would be about seventeen dollars. Note, the servant went and looked up his servant, laid hold on him, and took him

by the throat saying, Pay what thou owes. This was rough treatment. Doubtless he had entered into a quarrel with the man over the debt. Then the man began to plead, **Have patience with me, and I will pay thee.** Give me a little time and I will pay you the debt. He showed a willing mind to pay, but this servant would not be patient, but went and thrust him in prison. This was cruel treatment over the small sum of seventeen to twenty dollars, when his lord had forgiven him his debt of several million dollars. There are some people today who hold to such attitude toward their fellow-man in business transactions, not willing to be patient. There are church people who are just as hard against the brother with the mote in his eye, when they have beams in their own eyes. They represent the class that are not willing to do unto others as they would be done by. This hard-hearted servant is a type of such people.

When the other servants had learned what was done, they reported to their lord what they had heard. They were greatly sorrowful over the way their fellow-servant had been treated. Now, the point of the master's just resentment comes into play here. The lord called the over-servant, **O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredest me,** verse 32. Why have you been so cruel to your fellow-servant? Did I not forgive you? You should have had mercy on him as I had on you. His lord was greatly worried, very angry, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due. Now he must work and pay the debt. Thus, he that would not forgive should not be forgiven. Man's spirit of unforgiveness will provoke God's anger against him. Men must be willing to forgive their brethren of the wrongs committed against them if they expect Christ to forgive them of their sins when they beseech him at the throne of grace.

This chapter closes with the definite assertion that God will deal also with us in like manner if we from our hearts forgive not everyone his brother's trespasses.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: How may this teaching of forgiveness be applied to individuals today?

III. CHRIST'S TEACHING CONCERNING DIVORCE (Matthew 19:1-12)

Since this topic concerns the subject of divorce, and since divorce today is a matter lightly regarded by many American people, may the student study with care and an open heart the biblical truths on the subject. Note in verse three, the Pharisees came to Jesus with a question, not because they sought enlightenment, but for the purpose of entangling him in his teaching. They asked, **Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?** To them Jesus quoted what the Old Testament said about the matter, (Genesis 1:27; 2:24). See also Deuteronomy 24:1-4, concerning the subject of divorce. Jesus had declared, while in Galilee, Matthew 5:31, 32, his law of divorcement; namely, **Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery,** verse 32. The teaching here is plain and explicit. But they were seeking to entangle Jesus and to lessen the affections of the people for him. Jesus placed the emphasis on the one word **adultery**—the breaking of the marriage vow. That is the grave sin today. "Christ's argument for the indissoluble character of the original institution of marriage is that at the creation God made one man and one woman, each for the other. . . . He created a relation between man and wife more intricate and binding than even that between parent and child."—Alfred Plummer, in Peloubet's Notes.

What about the great number of divorce cases today in our country? Are they granted at the hands of the law on the basis of **adultery**; or are the great majority granted on the commonly called "incompatibility" cases — husband and wife mutually inconsistent, and incapable of harmonious living together? It is tragic to see in the United States young people in their early teens marry for "sport sake"—not old enough to sense the deep sacredness of the marriage vows. No wonder they soon become dissatisfied after marriage, and seek excuses for divorce.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: Ask one or more students of the class for sane discussion of present-day divorce practices.

IV. CHRIST BLESSED THE LITTLE CHILDREN (Matthew 19:13-15)

There is something about little children which causes most everyone to love them. In the previous topic of this lesson, Jesus made plain his law regarding the question of divorce. Now, in this topic he teaches the sacredness of childhood. And children in the home bring joy, completeness, and effect binding relationships which tend to make homelife more stable and happy. Note, here, they brought little children to Jesus, **that he should put his hands on them, and pray.** These who had faith in him did a kindness to the little children, desiring his blessings upon them. They wished Jesus to pray, asking God's blessings on them. But the disciples rebuked those who had brought the children to Jesus. They must have thought their Master too busy to take up any time with children. However, Jesus said, **Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.**

It is true, too many parents today pay too little care for their children, leaving them in the care and keeping of housemaids, older brothers and sisters who

often pay very little attention to them, and with door neighbors. Jesus said in substance the kingdom of heaven is theirs by right. While little they are innocent, easy to forget wrongs done them and quick to forgive them, ever ready to follow good parents' instructions. They deserve the greatest care, and the best spiritual guidance of parents, Sunday-school teachers and other good people while they are growing to young manhood and womanhood.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: Why should the average American home pay more loving care to the children in these homes? What would be Christ's answer today for the care of children?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Christ Answers the Rich Young Ruler—Matthew 19:16-26; Mark 10:24; Luke 12:33; Acts 4:34, 35; 1 Timothy 6:18, 19; James 2:8; Leviticus 19:18.

LESSON III

JANUARY 21, 1940

A New Standard of Greatness

(Matthew 20: 1-34)

Golden Text: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 20: 17-28

(Authorized Version)

17 And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of,

and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: All the events recorded in this lesson occurred in March, A. D. 30, the year of our Lord's crucifixion.

Place: The events of the chapter took place in Peraea, with the exception of the healing of the blind men recorded at the end of the chapter, which took place near Jericho.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples, the two blind men and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matthew 21:28, 33.

T.—Matthew 13:24.

W.—Mark 10:35; Acts 2:23; 3:13.

T.—Mark 14:36; John 18:11.

F.—Romans 8:17; 22 Corinthians 1:7.

S.—Revelation 1:9.

S.—John 13:14; Philippians 2:7; 1 Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:19.

THE INTRODUCTION

You are to study in this lesson Christ's standard of greatness as compared to that which men call great. The student will note the contrast which Jesus gives between greatness in the sight of God, and greatness in the sight of men, and also how he shows the difference in service to mankind. Humble service in God's kingdom work is counted here by Christ as the main consideration of all Christians.

I. CHRIST'S APPROACHING DEATH AND RESURRECTION (Matthew 20:17-19)

Christ's death and resurrection are two of the world's greatest events. Jesus had spoken of them together at different times before, making known to his disciples the things that would take place. In chapters 12:38-42; 16:21-28; 17:22, 23 of Matthew's Gospel, our Lord is recorded as having spoken of his death and resurrection. Now the student will note that the three verses here, under consideration in this topic, contain the fourth reference which Jesus made concerning his approaching death and resurrection. In these three verses Jesus made definite statements as to what would take place: namely, (1) he would be delivered to the chief priests and scribes; (2) that they

would condemn him to death; (3) that they would deliver him unto the Gentiles; (4) that the Gentiles would mock, scourge and crucify him; and (5) that the third day he would rise from the dead.

How did he know these things? This is a good question for everyone to seriously consider. Jesus was divine, having come from God as the only begotten Son; and possessing the divine nature, he knew all things that would come to pass. Not to worldly wisdom or knowledge did Jesus know these things; nor was it a mere guess, but through the prophetic inspiration of the Holy Spirit he knew the minute details of his death and resurrection. He was the Son of God, possessing infinite wisdom from above. Man does not know aforetime when he will die, neither how he will die, nor where he will die. God has wisely kept these things hidden from man's present knowledge. How fortunate it is for all mankind that this is God's will! But note, there is fine light shed on this prophecy by these words in John's Gospel, chapter 13, verses 1 and 3: **Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father. . . . Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God. Thus, Jesus had the divine knowledge of his approaching sufferings, death and resurrection. How wonderful he looked upon these things; not with a sense of fear, but with the divine submissiveness; not my will, but thine, be done. It was his Father's will for it to be so, and he thus gave his life as a ransom for the sins of the whole world.**

In this way Jesus was instructing his

disciples concerning those tragic events, and also preparing their minds to be courageous and to bear up under the awful tragedies awaiting their Lord and Master. They were to endure these things and ever remain faithful to him. So it is true today, every Christian should stand firm and true to the Son of God, although others may be faithless, scoffers and persecutors of the holy One.

FOR DISCUSSION: Let the students make a study of these scriptures: Matthew 26:47-50; 27:1-34. Ask a member of the class to tell briefly what happened to Jesus.

II. THE REQUEST OF THE MOTHER OF JAMES AND JOHN (Matthew 20:20-24)

We have here an important request which Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of James and John made to Jesus. You are to note also, James and John made the same request: Mark 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-30. The underlying principle of this request makes this topic an important study for every member of the class. A great teaching is here laid down by the Lord for Christian believers. It was a selfish request as any good Bible student can see.

Let us remember that James and John had been close followers of Jesus for more than these two and a half years prior to this time. Now, that he had made it known to his disciples of his imminent sufferings and death, James and John, from selfish motives, desired first place with him in the kingdom—sit, **one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory**, Mark 10:37. Such a request granted by Jesus would have placed these brothers above the other disciples; that is to say, in a superior position in the kingdom of God.

But in verse 22 of our scripture lesson, Jesus replied to the mother's request in

these words: **Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?** Here Jesus gave them, the mother and her two sons, just and severe reproof, although they were true lovers of the Lord. Most good mothers desire the best places for their sons, it is true, but it was enough here that James and John be content to remain obedient servants of their Master. However, they were positive in their reply to his question concerning the cup and his baptism. They said, **We are able.** They were not able, even then and a little later on, to endure the jeers, sufferings, and death of their Master, for a few weeks later they fled with the other disciples when the mob came to take him in Gethsemane. But Jesus told them that they would drink of his cup, the cup of suffering and death; they would suffer for Christ's sake, and the sting of death would come to them, as to everyone. Men and women down the centuries have suffered for the name of Jesus; they have sacrificed homes, lives of ease and pleasure; and have endured hardships and deprivations of many good things of this life to carry the Gospel message of the blessed Redeemer. The apostle Peter gives us these words: **For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps**, 1 Peter 2:21. The apostle Paul suffered for the sake of carrying the Gospel, see Colossians 1:24; Philipians 3:10. Note also, James drank the bloody cup first of all the disciples, Acts 12:2. John drank of this bitter cup years later when he was banished on the isle of Patmos, Revelation 1:9. As a concluding thought here, Jesus said: **But to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.** What God has ordained concerning this matter shall be granted according to his own good will. Well might

Jesus have put it thus: "It is not mine to give to those that seek selfishly and are ambitious of it, but to those that by great humility and self-denial are prepared to receive it."

FOR DISCUSSION: Should church members, from selfish motives, seek the high offices of the church? May Christ's teaching here apply to the church?

III. THE WAY TO RENDER CHRISTIAN SERVICE TO OTHERS (Matthew 20:25-28)

Following his words of reproof to James and John concerning their desire for first place in the kingdom, Jesus gave them a fine teaching on true Christian service to others. He reminded them by saying: Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them, and **THEY THAT ARE GREAT exercise authority over them**, verse 25. The rulers of the Gentiles exercised control over Judaea and Samaria at that time, levying and collecting taxes, maintaining civil and political authority for the Roman government. Such officers were held responsible by the Roman authorities at Rome for faithful performance of the duties placed upon them by the high authority of the Roman power. Therefore, many of the officers stationed in Palestine at that time **lorded it over the people**, exacting heavier taxes in some instances than was required, and in others wielding the hand of dominion and power. Jesus and his disciples in their travels for two and a half years of Gospel ministry had had the opportunity to observe the authority and power which the Gentiles exercised over the people for political prestige and material gain. So, Christ here uses a fine point to teach his disciples the lesson of real human service to others.

He, by contrasting the lordship of the Gentiles over the people with true Christian service of the followers of the Master, told his disciples that it should not be so among them. He said, **Whosoever**

will be great among you, let him be your minister. In the sight of God, greatness does not lie in man-made authority and earthly dominion of certain rulers of the nations. But the man or woman who would become great in God's sight must be an humble servant of the Lord. Christian service, freely and cheerfully rendered to lost humanity, is the greatest service rendered to civilization. Christ's law of sacrificial service to others for the kingdom of God takes precedence over man-made authority and political rule. May the student note here, first, that it is the Christian's duty to serve one another for mutual edification, which include humility and unselfishness. The apostle Peter in his epistle exhorted the brethren to be subject one to another, and to be clothed with humility (1 Peter 5: 5). Saint Paul said, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and think wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19). In the second place, remember that the Christian is to discharge his duty faithfully in the kingdom work to be counted great. Paul is called the great apostle because he served the Lord with all his heart and soul. It is the humble and faithful service rendered to God which will enable one to be counted chief among men. Christ came to minister to both the Jew and the Gentile, and to sacrifice his life for the sins of the world. Jesus set himself as a pattern of humble service before his disciples. Christians today are to accept his pattern, and live useful lives in humble service to God. As Jesus came to redeem the lost souls and to give, to all who will accept salvation through him a place in heaven, just so, all disciples of Christ should seek to render Christian service to those who know not God, and to win them to Christ. The church member who would be great, let him serve best of all.

FOR DISCUSSION: Why is Christ's view of greatness to be preferred over

that which is held great by men of ambition and power? Compare Adolph Hitler's lording it over the German people today with the Gentiles' lording it over the people of Palestine in the days of the disciples.

IV. CHRIST HEALING TWO BLIND MEN

(Matthew 20:29-34)

The class will remember that Jesus and his disciples were passing through Jericho, on their way from Peraea to Jerusalem, when the two blind men by the roadside cried out, **Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.** It is man's nature to seek help where it may be granted when he is in dire need. It is pathetic, nevertheless true, blindness renders the blind pitiable and in most instances perfectly helpless. But here we have a miracle performed upon these blind men by Jesus. The student is to note: (1) the faith which the blind men had in Jesus; (2) the opposition of the multitude to their cries for mercy; (3) the question which Jesus asked them; (4) the miraculous healing by Jesus. Note, these blind men had faith in Christ's power to heal, and thus they asked that they might see. This was their need of the body, the bringing to life the vision of the eye which is one of the most important organs of the body. But the multitude would not have the Master interrupted while on his way to Jerusalem. Some people are that way today, not willing to repent and see the salvation of the Lord. But Jesus **stood still**; he heard their cry, and asked, **What will ye that I shall do unto you?** Jesus knew, but he said it that the multitude might hear their heart's desire for sight, and obtain a lesson of his humble service to human needs. Jesus is always ready

to heal the spiritually blind when they turn to him in faith, doubting nothing. He touched their eyes, and immediately their vision was restored to them. What a wonderful experience that day did the two blind men and the multitude behold! What miraculous power! Now, may the student note that these two men who had just received their sight followed him. They had great desire to follow the blessed Son of God who could give sight to the blind, and perform wonderful works among the people. He had proved to them his wonderful power. Men and women stand in need today of his healing power. Their souls are sinsick, their lives are blighted, their burdens are many, and their hearts are torn with despair. He is the Redeemer and Comforter of mankind, and to him all should go for refuge and strength.

Then, again, is it not true that many people are wilfully blind spiritually speaking? They hear but do not see; they read but do not understand; and they are intelligent but do not accept the truth of the Word. How pathetic it is for cultured people, those who have had the privileges and opportunities in life to know God's will toward men, to go on through life neglecting so great salvation. They need to become submissive to the divine truth as it is revealed in God's holy word. Stubborn wills to spiritual truths are stumbling blocks to the cause of Christ. They are standing in the way, not only of themselves, but also in the way of others who would have their eyes opened to the sunlight of God's eternal truth.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Need of Laborers in God's Vineyard. Matthew 20:1-15; Deuteronomy 15:9; Proverbs 23:6; Romans 9:21.

LESSON IV

JANUARY 28, 1940

Jesus Dramatically Proclaiming His Messiahship

(Matthew 21: 1-16)

Golden Text: Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. Matthew 21:5.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 21: 1-16*(Authorized Version)*

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

7 And brought the ass, and the colt and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before,

and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased,

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: The triumphal entry occurred on Sunday of Passion Week, April 2, A. D. 30; and the cleansing of the Temple occurred on the following day, April 3.

Place: The two disciples secured the ass and the colt near Bethphage, on the Mount of Olives. The exact location is not known. The triumphal procession itself took place on the road between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples and the multitude.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29.

T.—Isa. 62:11; Ze. 9:9; John 12:13, 15.

W.—II Kg. 9:13; Ps. 118:25, 26.

Th.—Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45.

F.—Luke 7:16; John 6:14.

S.—Deut. 14:25; Mark 11:11.

Su.—Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:11; Mark 11:17.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson opens with Jesus and his disciples at Bethany. He had spent Saturday night, it is thought, in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and on Sunday morning he planned to go to Jerusalem. The class will find this march of the triumphal entry of Jesus and the multitude into Jerusalem most interesting. Every important act connected with this triumphal entry as found in the scripture records should be carefully studied by each student of the class.

I. JESUS SENDS TWO DISCIPLES TO BRING AN ASS AND THE COLT (Matt. 21: 1-7)

The student should find the triumphal entry of Jesus on Sunday of Passion Week into the city of Jerusalem an interesting study. He is to remember that Jesus and the disciples had spent Saturday evening in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus at Bethany, and had been guests at a great supper in the home of one called Simon the leper. Here in this little town just a few miles from Jerusalem Jesus could rest in quietness and converse with his friends. Note, this occasion is the last visit which he made to Jerusalem before his crucifixion. On Sunday morning, Palm Sunday it is called, Jesus sent two disciples, some think Peter and John, to Bethphage, a small village near by, to bring an ass and the colt to him. We are to note here that Bethphage is to be recognized because it supplied the ass which Jesus rode from Bethany into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Jesus said, *Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them and bring them unto me.* That was a definite request to the two disciples, and the beast was a certain one tied. The Lord had need of this beast of travel to fill his purpose, according to the prophets (Isa. 62: 11; Zech. 9: 9;

John 12: 15). The significant fact here is: **The Lord had need of them.** Think what meaning these words convey! Jesus had need of the disciples while he lived. He prayed just before he was betrayed into the hands of sinful men, in the seventeenth chapter of Saint John that God would keep them, and that they should carry on his work. Jesus has always had need of true followers to carry the Gospel to lost souls. That is the great need of the world today—the carrying of the gospel message to all the world. Note, the two disciples obeyed immediately. Just so, in the name of Jesus every child of God should not hesitate the doing of menial tasks for the cause of Christ.

In verse five note, **Behold, thy King cometh.** There are two things which were intended by the coming of Jesus to Jerusalem in this way: (1) his Kingly entry should be made that the scriptures might be fulfilled (Zech. 9: 9); (2) the daughters of Sion, the church, should know of his meek and humble entrance into Jerusalem as the blessed Messiah. The student is directed to read Judg. 10: 4; 12: 4; II Sam. 13: 29 and 18: 9; II Sam. 15: 1; I Kgs. 10: 26-28; and Jer. 22: 19 for a study on the uses of beasts of travel by judges and kings of old. In this triumphal entry Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords—the Chief Ruler of men. He is to be considered above all power on earth.

FOR COMMENT: What is the most significant thought in this topic? How may Christians apply it in their daily lives?

II. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY (Matt. 21: 8-11)

This entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was significant, and the student should note with interest what took place on this occasion. The disciples, when they had brought the ass, placed some of their clothes upon the ass,

which served for better accommodations for Jesus to ride upon. They furnished what they had at hand for the comforts of their Lord. It was a simple service, gladly rendered. In like manner, the Christian has opportunity today for humble service to his fellowman. In the next place, note, the multitude **spread their garments in the way.** They shared in this kingly procession from Bethany into Jerusalem. This added interest in and a great concern for this momentous event. Likewise, others joined in the triumphal entry by cutting branches of the trees and spreading them in the pathway of Jesus. Here was the multitude, the common people, in this procession, marching towards Jerusalem with the blessed Messiah. There was something impressive, meaningful in this Kingly procession! Note, the throng that went before and those that followed Jesus cried aloud, saying, **Hosannah to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosannah in the highest.**

This word "Hosannah" is Hebrew, and it occurs six times in the Gospels, exclusively in the record of Jesus' triumphal entry. It is probable that the word is a contraction of the Hebrew phrase, "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee," (Ps. 118: 25), which is **Anna, Jehovah, hoshiah an.** "This psalm was sung, and this verse of it was used as a refrain by the people, at Feast of the Tabernacles; and the refrain was abbreviated through constant popular repetition into hashanna. It is read in both the Authorized Version and the Revised Version as 'save now.' We can thus understand how in this sense the word should be followed by acclamations, as 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.'"—**James Cooper, in Peloubet's Notes.**

This triumphal entry stirred, aroused to great excitement, all the city, and they asked, **Who is this?** The multitudes cried, **This is Jesus, the prophet of**

Nazareth of Galilee. For reference to Jesus being called a prophet, read Luke 7: 16; 13: 33; John 4: 19; 6: 14; 9: 17; 7: 40. Also read Isaiah 1: 21 concerning the fulfillment of prophecy. Christ's triumphal entry was, in essence, a final and necessary link in a chain of consecutive events which were foreseen and embraced in his plan, and which was the will of God.

FOR COMMENT: Why did the people call Jesus a prophet? Let a member of the class describe the triumphal entry of Jesus.

III. CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE (Matt. 21: 12-16)

When Jesus went into Jerusalem, he did not go to the royal palace, nor into the king's court, but he went as King into the Temple, for his kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world. This was on Monday, when he went back from Bethany to Jerusalem and into the Temple where he found the money changers and robbers. The student is to note here that Jesus before this time had cleansed the Temple, using a scourge of small cords to drive out the money changers (John 2: 13-16). This time, which is called the second cleansing, Jesus drove them out with a command, and by casting out all that sold and bought, and by overturning the seats of those that sold doves. His very look, his manner of disgust for their having made the Lord's house a den of thieves, and his expression of righteous indignation on his face forced them out without a moment's delay. His supernatural power was too great for their human strength.

This scene took place in the larger outer court of the Temple, called the court of the Gentiles. This court was separated from the shrine by a stone parapet on which tables were placed, warning Gentiles not to cross it on pain of death. In this outer court oxen, sheep,

doves, meal, wines, and the like were sold for sacrifices to those who had come for the Passover Feast. Exchangers sat at the tables to change the current Roman money to the **didrachma** which was the old Jewish coin. The whole scene was like a fair, and the tumult was greatly disturbing to the worshipers on the inside. Thus, when Jesus drove them out and secured order, he assured his Lordship over the Temple and the sacred worship of those inside. This is an instance of his power over the works of men, and Satan.

He said, **It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.** The student will note the great difference of purpose here—house of prayer, but made into a den of thieves. The Temple was sanctified, in a special manner, to be a house of prayer, not a den of thieves. Jesus quoted Isaiah 56: 7 to them; thus reminding them the purpose of God's holy Temple, and showing them the shameful use to which they had occupied its courts. These two expressions are certainly in sharp contrast, laying emphasis on the corrupt uses, and making it a "den of thieves," (Jer. 7: 11). Christ emphatically made it plain to them that the Temple was not a place for robbers and thieves but the house of prayer. Christ called them **thieves**, for many of those who were called priests, as well as others, exacted that which did not belong to them. God was displeased with such evil doings in his holy Temple. The very men who should have been the holiest in all Israel were in God's house robbing people who had come burdened with spiritual needs to worship the true and the living God.

A few moments later, note, will you, how the **blind and the lame came to him in the Temple.** He healed them. What moments of joy! Think how the Temple had been quickly changed from noise like a fair to the quiet place of prayer; men

and women healed; out of disorder and confusion came quietness and prayer to God. What a scene of praise and worship! Think how the face that had flamed with indignation a few moments before now softened with the radiance of divine healing. The whole scene is full of deep meaning, and represents one of the greatest pictures in Matthew's Gospel. Even the children in the Temple were greatly moved, crying out, **Hosannah to the Son of David.** Note, the children could shout praises to his great name. They had heard, no doubt, the shouts at the triumphal entry, and had entered the Temple with others on Monday to see Jesus. Thus, it is significant to note here that Jesus defended the children from their unjust abusers, and he said, **Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.** It was perfectly natural for them to shout praises with others. Jesus always protected the little children.

But the chief priests and the scribes were moved with indignation. The sons of Annas, being chief priests, had control of these sales in the Temple, and drew great profits from them. Consequently, this cleansing of the Temple greatly incensed them and others against Jesus, and they were the leading ones who had a hand in effecting his death a few days later. They were so provoked with his cleansing of the Temple in upsetting their business of gain that they went to work to bring about his early death. But for fear of the people they could not do this off-hand and in the open, but they sought secret means to effect their purpose. Thus they found in Judas Iscariot the way to capture Jesus, and to take him to his death.

FOR COMMENT: Why did the money changers flee at Jesus' command? Should God's house, the church, be used for profit making business today? Compare this cleansing of the Temple with Christ's cleansing the hearts of men.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: True hemiah 2: 17-20; 4: 1 to 6:1-19. Joshua, Leadership and Faithful Following. Ne- chapters one to four.

LESSON V

FEBRUARY 4, 1940

Holding Life Sacred*(A PRINCIPLE OF TEMPERATE LIVING)*

(Gen. 1: 27-31; I Cor. 6: 19, 20; II Cor. 6: 16—7: 1)

Golden Text: Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. I Corinthians 6: 20.

THE PRINTED TEXT: GENESIS 1: 27-31; I CORINTHIANS

6: 19, 20; II CORINTHIANS 6: 16—7: 1

(Authorized Version)

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

19 What! know ye not that your body

is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

18 And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: The Bible does not give us the exact time when man was created. The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians was written in A. D. 57. It is generally believed that the Second Epistle was written some months later, possibly in the same year.

Place: Man was created in or near the Garden of Eden. The First Epistle of

Paul was written in Ephesus, and the second was written in Macedonia.

Persons: The first man Adam and the apostle Paul.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Genesis 3:1-24.

T.—1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

W.—1 Peter 2:5; Hebrew 3:6.

T.—Ephesians 2:21, 22.

F.—Rom. 14: 7, 8; 2 Cor. 6:16; 7:23.

S.—Galatians 3:13; Hebrew 9:12-15.

S.—1 Peter 1:18, 19.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson begins with a study of the creation of man. Since it is an interesting study for most everyone, chapters two and three of Genesis should be carefully studied by each student of the Adult Class. Also, as this lesson deals with the sacredness of human life, it will be of much value for the entire class to study other references, or helps bearing on the thought, that are not given in this lesson material.

I. THE CREATION OF MAN (Genesis 1:27-31)

In verse twenty-six of the first chapter of Genesis, God said, **Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.** Just when, as to time, God made man it is hard to ascertain. The important thing here is God created man in his own image. The expressions "in our image" and "after our likeness" are differently explained by different Bible scholars. Dr. J. G. Murphy says, "'Image' is a word taken from sensible things, and denotes likeness in outward form, while the material may be different. 'Likeness' is a more general term, indicating resemblance in any quality, external or internal."—In Peloubet's Notes. Dr. L. S. Keyser has had this to say of man's creation: "We are justified in saying that the human body has such correspondence with the being of God that nothing unnatural or incongruous was done when the Son of God assumed a human body, and func-

tioned through it while he dwelt here among men, and then bore it to the right hand of God to be glorified. We certainly can say that the human body as fashioned in Eden was not out of harmony with the divine form and essence."—In Peloubet's Notes.

The following quotation is given here as further comment on man's creation: "Christ is only the express image of God's person, as the Son of His Father, having the same nature. It is only some of God's honor that is put upon man, who is God's image only as the shadow in the glass, or the king's impress upon the coin. God's image upon man consists in these three things: (1) In his nature and constitution, not those of his body (for God has not a body), but those of his soul. This honor indeed God has put upon the body of man, that the Word was made flesh, the Son of God was clothed with a body like ours and will shortly clothe ours with a glory like that of his."—Matthew Henry's Commentary, Volume 1.

As God is holy, so man was created holy, possessing what is known as "original righteousness." Thus, we reason man's mind or soul was not created without moral and spiritual qualities; that is to say, it was not created in an indifferent or sinful state, but with powers to reason, judge, feel, do things, accept or reject at his own choosing. May we note, further, (1) that man was created after other creatures had been created; (2) that they were created male and female; (3) that God blessed them; and (4) that he gave them dominion over the things of the earth. Thus created in the image of God, man was the highest of creation, possessing God's divine nature. He was a living soul. Flesh and spirit, heaven and earth were put togeth-

er in his creation; that is to say, he was made perfect before the fall. Again, the student is to note the blessings which God bestowed upon man: (1) he is to bear children; (2) he is to subdue the earth; and (3) he is to live from the fruits of the earth, both of the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. Accordingly, the student is to understand that man was constituted by God to be master of the animal as well as of the vegetable world. This really summarizes in verses twenty-nine and thirty God's created works described in the chapter.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How is man to be considered made in the image of God? What faculties and powers did God give to man when he created him?

II. THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(1 Corinthians 6:19, 20)

We have in this topic a study of the relationship of the Christian's body and the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthian brethren, said, **Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, and which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?** It is to be noted, Paul here desired to impress the fact that the body when cleansed and made pure, is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Man regenerated by the blood of Jesus becomes God's temple and a fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. But, let us note here, in the first topic of this lesson we saw that man was created perfect, having no sin upon him. But after the fall of man in the garden of Eden, (read Genesis, chapter three), the curse of sin was placed upon mankind. Wherefore, mankind must be redeemed through Jesus Christ, accept the New Life, then the Holy Spirit can come in and dwell in the heart of the child of God. The following quotation sheds some light on this point:

"Man has not only body and soul, but also spirit. Deeper down where the soul

with its consciousness can enter there is a spirit—nature linking man with God. So fearful is sin's power, that in some this power is given up to death: they are sensual, not having the Spirit. In others it is nothing more than a dormant power, a possibility waiting for the quickening of the Holy Spirit. In the believer it is the inner chamber of the heart, of which the Spirit has taken possession, and out of which he waits to do his gracious work, making soul and body holy to the Lord." —Andrew Murray, in Peloubet's Notes.

It is interesting to note in verse twenty Paul's words, **Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.** Now what was this price which Paul mentioned here? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). Jesus gave his life as a ransom on the cross for the sins of the world. He became our sin-bearer, and paid the price with his life that we might be saved. Then again, the writer of Hebrews tells us, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12). Christ came to seek and to save the lost, and he sacrificed his life in humble service that all who will might be saved. It is his will that none shall perish, but that all should seek salvation and be saved from their sins. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your manner of life handed down from your fathers. But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Note again, Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:7, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

The Corinthians were urged to glorify God in their bodies. All Christians are, therefore, urged to glorify God, praising him through true worship and loyal service in the kingdom work. To hold life sacred, the Christian must follow Jesus in faithful service, and live a life of self-denial of the sinful things of the world. Christians are glorifying God when they sing his praises, teach his Word, administer to the poor and needy in his name, carry his Gospel to dying souls, share their material blessings in spreading the gospel, and by performing any other true Christian activities in a cheerful way. The rich, the poor, the illiterate and the learned have opportunities, according as God has blessed them, to glorify his name, and be living temples of the Lord.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: When does an individual become a fit temple for the Holy Spirit? Ask a member of the class to explain, "Ye are bought with a price." How may Christians today glorify God in their bodies?

III. THE SEPARATED LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN (2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1)

What is meant by the separated life of the Christian? What does it exclude and what does it include? And how are you to live this separated life? These are pertinent questions which every Christian should answer for himself.

Paul had learned, from his labors in Corinth, of the many heathen temples which contained Roman and Greek deities, all an insult to God, and a thrust against the Christian faith. They were temples which had been erected to man-made gods. Note how fitting Paul put in verse sixteen the question: **What agreement hath a temple of God with idols?** The fact is, a worshipper of the true and living God has no part in the worship in such heathen temples. Paul here was more likely thinking of these

words of Jesus, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). Christ prayed that his followers might be one even as he and the Father are one (John 17:21-23). There is no agreement of a Christian's true worship to God with heathen worship of idols made by man; for instance, the old worship of Baal by the false prophets and their followers has no agreement with true Christian worship of today. But the trouble now is: multitudes of people everywhere are worshipping the god of mammon in various ways, instead of worshipping the true and living God. Many so-called Christians, members of the church and church-goers, are not, by their very acts, living the separated life. Their daily living testifies to this truth. But people are exhorted to **Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, verse seventeen.** We cannot live for God the separated life, and at the same time serve the god of this world. They do not agree; one stands for truth and righteousness; the other, for evil and eternal condemnation. God promises to receive those who will take a stand with him, and he will be their heavenly Father. Then they shall be to him his sons and daughters. This separation from the world is moral and spiritual, and not necessarily physical, and local separation from certain people. We believe a child of God can live the separated life unto Christ, and yet have door neighbors, or partners in business who are vile sinners; or he may be a co-laborer with others, who are living worldly lives, in daily toil for life's support, and still maintain his separated life unto God. In such cases it may be most difficult, but it is possible, we believe.

The separated life in Christ Jesus requires the indwelling of the Holy Spirit himself in the individual's heart. Since man was created by God according to his

divine purposes, and since we, in our inner selves, have the honor of being made in his image, and also since we have the privilege of communing with the supreme Father himself, we should realize fully that according to his purpose we were made for holiness, and we should also humbly strive to attain to God's requirement of holy living. It seems a fact, for anyone to meet this requirement and to live the separated life in Christ Jesus, he will have to practice self-denial, endure hardships, overcome evil temptations, take up his cross daily, and render joyful services to the Lord. In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Man alone cannot live this separated life from the world of evil temptations without God.

As Paul trusted not in his own strength to fight the good fight of faith in God, just so the individual today must trust in God, and let him direct the way he should go. The holy Spirit will direct aright, in that silent voice, the lives of those who will yield to his power, and let him dwell in their hearts.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How should a Christian conduct himself with his fellow-man, and still live the separate life unto God? What are the essentials needed for a Christian to live this separated life?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Living the Temperate Life—Exodus 20:7; Jeremiah 7:21-25; Proverbs 23:1-35; Matthew 16:24-28; Acts 5:29-32; 1 Corinthians 15:57-58.

LESSON VI

FEBRUARY 11, 1940

The Perils of Rejecting Christ

(Matthew 21: 17— 22: 14)

Golden Text: I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 21: 28-43

(Authorized Version)

28 But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

29 He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise, And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots be-

lieved him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

37 But, last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39 And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miser-

ably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Christ cursed the fig-tree a short while before he cleansed the Temple. The remarks concerning the withered fig-tree, and all other teachings recorded in this lesson belong to Tuesday, April the fourth.

Place: The withered fig-tree was on the Mount of Olives, not far from Jerusalem. All the other teachings and words of our Lord in this lesson were uttered in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples and others who followed him.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mark 11:19; Luke 21:37; 22:39; John 8:1, 2.

T.—Mark 11:12-26.

W.—Jeremiah 24:1-8; Hosea 9:10; Joel 1:7, 12.

T.—Matthew 15:7-9; Matthew 23:1-6.

F.—Isaiah 29:13-16

S.—Matthew 3:1-3; Luke 3:12, 13.

S.—Jeremiah 2:21-23; Mark 12:1-13; Hebrews 2:3; 11:36, 37.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson sets forth splendid teachings which Jesus gave concerning the right way of worship to Almighty God. The class will find in this study the use which Jesus made of certain parables to teach spiritual truths regarding hypocrisy and false worship of the Jews in general. Each student should note, as he carefully prepares the lesson during the week for Sunday, that the teachings as given by Christ in the parables in this lesson can be applied today to false worshippers and hypocrites in the church.

I. JESUS IN BETHANY

(Matthew 21:17; Mark 11:19
Luke 21:37)

The small town of Bethany was situated on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, approximately two miles from the holy city and on the southeastern side of the Mount of Olives. It was the home town of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Christ had visited the home at various times, and had been well entertained by these three persons who loved him dearly. The scripture tells us that he often visited Bethany to be with the small group of his close friends living there. It is well to note here that Jesus had been invited to a supper at the home of one called "Simon the Leper" on the Saturday evening before, and that at that supper Mary had anointed Jesus with the precious ointment.

It was on Monday following his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday that he went back to Jerusalem from Bethany and cleansed the Temple. As the day was drawing to an end, Jesus

returned to Bethany where he might rest quietly through the night with his close friends. Here he could rest and pray to Almighty God in peace and quietness. Men often need to get away from the stir of things, as did Jesus, and seek God in solemn prayer and deep meditations. Bethany was the quiet village where Christ could go for quietness and close fellowship with his friends. The class is to remember that Jesus was not only a friend to mankind at all times, but also he loved dearly all who would draw themselves unto him.

FOR COMMENT: Have some member of the class to state concisely the value of true friendship. What kind of friends should one seek to have with his fellow-man?

II. CHRIST CURSED THE FIG TREE (Matthew 21:18-22)

In the morning, Tuesday, Christ returned again to Jerusalem with his disciples. Note, as he went he **hungered**. This represents his physical desire for food, and concerned his physical nature as a human being. Whether he and his disciples left Bethany that morning before taking a meal we do not know. But as they passed by the fig-tree, which the day before he had cursed because of its barrenness of fruit, Peter said to Christ, **Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursed is withered away**. According to some Bible students, the cursing of the fig tree is figurative and represents: (1) the state of hypocrites in general; and (2) the state and nation of the Jews in particular.

In Palestine the fig-tree bore the evidence or sign of figs before the leaves appeared. Thus the fig-tree was false in the sense that it had leaves but no fruit. In the cursing of it, Christ meant to teach spiritual truths to his disciples. Christ looks for the good results of religion in those who possess it. He ex-

pects fruit of them through true Christian service to their fellow-man. In John 15:5 Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. . . . If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." Many who profess to be Christians, but in truth are dead branches of the True Vine, are like the barren fig-tree, possessing no value to Christ. Wherefore, their sin of barrenness is justly punished by their being cast out as the dead branch of the vine. Christ meant to teach that a false and hypocritical profession of faith soon withers in this world, and punishment is the ultimate reward. The fig-tree soon lost its leaves. Just so, all hypocrites, having no principle, no root in themselves, will finally come to naught. Christ did not uphold hypocrisy. Men today who are true to the principles of Christ hate false living in others.

Now, concerning this teaching relative to the Jews, Christ meant to show his disappointment which he had in their manner of worship; that is to say, they called Abraham their father, but did not the works of Abraham. They had form and ritual, but denied that the Messiah had come. In the next place, they denied his deity and disowned him as the Son of God. Speaking of Jewish worship, John Walter Good has the following to say:

"Outwardly their forms and religious performances made a great show of spiritual fruits; but inwardly they were without the Spirit of God, and without the fruits of righteousness. The incident had, therefore, a double meaning for the apostles. It was an assertion of Christ's divine power, suggesting victory for his kingdom, and courage to his apostles."—In Peloubet's Notes.

FOR COMMENT: What is the proper way for the children of God to deal with

false professors of Christianity? How should the church deal with its hypocrites?

III. CHRIST DECLARED HIS

AUTHORITY

(Matthew 21:23-27)

The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people were ready to question Jesus when he entered the Temple on that Tuesday morning. They said, **By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?** Note, these were pointed questions which they used to draw him out to entangle him in some way. Remember that Jesus had, on the previous day, driven the money changers and traders from the Temple, and now these leaders or rulers of the Jews had purposed this attack against Jesus. Thus he was interrupted in his discourse in the Temple by the chief priests and elders. It is a sign of evil intentions for individuals to interrupt divine teachings in the house of God, but these Jewish religionists did it nevertheless. Evidently, they did not seek information or his authority, but intended by this double question to make charges against him for his acts in the Temple.

Jesus saw their evil intent in asking the questions, and so he answered with the question: **The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?** This put them to thinking. They quickly reasoned, **If we shall say, From Heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?** Therefore, we must be careful how we answer him. **If we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.** In this case we will turn the people against us. Accordingly, Jesus had put them to the test, and rather than admit to either as their answer, they said, **We cannot tell.** Jesus

saw their intrigue, and so he replied, **Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.** By his wisdom he silenced them.

It may be well to note here that those who claimed the right to teach in Israel during the days of Christ there was no principle more firmly established by universal consent than that authoritative teaching required recognized authority. Hence all teaching must be authoritative since it was traditional; that is to say, approved by authority, and handed down from teacher to disciple. So this was one aspect of the controversy which the chief priests and elders raised against Jesus. But note, Nicodemus, a scholarly man among the Jews, had admitted before this incident that Christ was a teacher sent from God, (John 3:2). It is a truth today that many men of learning and rank question the divinity of Jesus, and object to his asserted authority concerning things spiritual. While the chief priests and the rulers of the Jews sought opportunity to entrap Jesus, and to bring him to an early death, in a similar manner, many intelligent people today, under the influence and power of Satan, are stumbling-stones in the pathway of Christianity. They ignore the divine truths taught by Christ, but willingly tread the ways of the world. Jesus' power and authority were convincing to minds open to the Gospel truth.

FOR COMMENT: Why did the chief priests and the rulers fail to entrap Jesus? Why did they fail to silence him in the Temple?

IV. UNBELIEVING ISRAEL CONDEMNED BY CHRIST

(Matthew 21:28—22:14)

In this study Christ determined to tell Israel, through parables, that by their

stubborn unbelief they were to be rejected by God.

In the parable of the two sons, note the words of the father, **Son, go work to-day in my vineyard**, verse 28. This was a call for service, a request for labor in the father's vineyard. The son's labor was needed, but note his emphatic reply, **I will not**. This was a flat denial of his father's request. There was no pretense or excuse made, but simply a flat denial of his father's wishes. Note that. There are some people today who deliberately refuse to do what God wants them to do in his vineyard. They find excuses when the pastor or some leader in the church asks them to do something for the cause of Christ's kingdom. But note what this son did when he had considered the matter seriously, **But afterward he repented himself, and went**. This shows that he was sorry for disobeying his father. Thus, on second thought, when he had considered what he had done, he changed his mind, and went out into the vineyard to carry out his father's wishes. When Christians act upon matters with great care, they will most likely do the right thing.

Consider now the second son in this parable. When asked by his father to go work in his vineyard, he said, **I go, sir: and went not**. This was a definite promise to his father to work in the vineyard. This showed instant readiness to obey. But he deceived his father by failing to carry out his promise. He played the part of a hypocrite. He said he would go and work, but he went not, and he gave no excuse for not going.

"The scribes and Pharisees, as professing zeal for the law, set themselves in the way as though they would fulfill the commands; this, their profession, was like the second son's promised obedience.

But they said and did not (Matthew 23:2); the prophet Isaiah, as the Lord declared, had long since described them truly (Matthew 15:8; cf Isaiah 29:13), 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me'; and so was it here."—R. C. Trench in Peloubet's Notes.

When they had replied to Jesus' question by saying, **The first**, meaning the first son, Jesus replied, **Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you**. The application here is to the Jewish rulers and the outwardly correct persons (those who deemed themselves better than others) in contrast with some who were recognized very wicked. Jesus here for the first time, makes open and personal application through this parable to the Jewish authorities. Thus he used the opportunity to speak out boldly to them, and also to the people concerning them. Publicans and harlots were considered vile and loathsome to the scribes and Pharisees who thought themselves strictly religious individuals. "To tell the proud, self-satisfied zealots for righteousness that the moral scum of society was nearer the kingdom of God than they, was to offer them a moral and unpardonable insult."—A. B. Bruce.

FOR DISCUSSION: In the parable of the two sons, ask a member of the class to contrast or compare the attitudes of the sons. How do they represent certain people, or classes of people, in religious matters today?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. Matthew 21:33-46; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:21-30; Mark 12:1-12; Acts 7:51-53.

LESSON VII

FEBRUARY 18, 1940

Good Citizens and Good Neighbors

(Matthew 22: 15— 23:39)

Golden Text: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Matthew 22:39.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 22: 15— 23: 34-40

(Authorized Version)

15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men:

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

19 Show me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's;

and unto God the things that are God's.

22 When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, saying,

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: The Tuesday of Passion Week in the year of our Lord. A. D. 30, April 4.

Place: In Jerusalem, probably not far from the Temple. The events of this lesson took place possibly within the Temple area.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, Herodians and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mark 12:13-34.

T.—Luke 20:20-40.

W.—Mark 12:18-27

T.—Exodus 3:6, 16, 17, 18.

F.—Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44.

S.—Jeremiah 23:5; 30:9; 33:15-26.

S.—2 Chronicles 24:21; Psalm 17:8, 9; 91:1-6; Luke 13:31-35.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with Christ's closing words in the Temple a short while before his betrayal, trial and crucifixion. The events in the lesson bring Christ's last visit to Jerusalem to a climactic close. His conversation with the Herodians, Sadducees and the Pharisees, and the multitude is to be studied carefully by the student

who would get the most from the teachings which Jesus gave to his listeners.

I. JESUS ANSWERED THREE QUESTIONS (Matthew 22:15-40)

The Pharisees and the Sadducees sought by entrapping questions to entangle Jesus in his conversation. The student will note here that the chief sects among the Jews were the Pharisees and the Sadducees who were described as Formalists, Puritans, and Free-thinkers. Their teachings and religious practices were antagonistic to the teachings of Christ. They adhered to the old "traditions" of Jewish worship which were contrary to the way Christ was teaching. Thus, they not only opposed him, but also sought to destroy him. Since the Pharisees play a very important part in this lesson, we are giving a brief description of them from Edward E. Anderson's Commentary:

"The Pharisees were essentially a religious party, fanatically opposed to whatever was non-Jewish. Purity and holiness they sought to attain by the most rigorous and scrupulous observance of the written law and the unwritten traditions down to the smallest minutæ.... They were the soul of opposition to Jesus, opposing him on national and religious questions. Their spirit is characterized by Jesus as hypocrites, i. e., the spirit of untruthfulness in religious life."

The first question which these Pharisees addressed to Jesus was: **Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?** The student will remember that Caesar was the Roman Emperor whose image and superscription were on the coin handed to him by his questioners. Note also that the Roman government at that time exercised political control over Judæa, and had governors and tax-collectors residing in the country to look after its interests. The Jews hated the tax-col-

lectors and were reluctant to pay the taxes exacted of them by the Roman authorities. As used here the word "tribute" means a poll-tax, which was levied against everyone living in Judea. "Paying the head-tax to the Roman was the most immediate and humiliating recognition of subjection to the heathen, and we may be sure that among the easily excited crowd who filled the Temple courts when Jesus was asked this question there were many who regarded paying the poll-tax as the very badge of slavery."—John A. Broadus in Peloubet's Notes.

When Jesus took the piece of money, he said, **Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.** Jesus' answer was twofold. First, Christ meant, we believe, to teach his questioners, and all others, the Christian duty of obedience and respect for the civil law. Since they were living under the protection, and privileges provided by the Roman government as exercised over them by the governors and the tax-collectors stationed among them, they should, as honorable citizens, pay tribute (taxes) to Caesar. Surely it cost the Roman government money to exercise political authority over them and maintain peace and protection among them. Therefore, Jesus would impress upon them their duty to pay the tax to the government. Any people should be willing to support the government that assures to them adequate protection, and peaceful pursuits of life.

In the second place, Jesus made it plain, or emphasized the truth, that there was danger of people forgetting God. He showed that they, as all people, should pay loving service and true worship to the heavenly Father; that is to say, render to God obedience and true loyalty for his many blessings. True servants of God are most often the best citizens. They are law abiding individuals who are willing to support their government.

But these Pharisees marveled at Jesus' reply, and left in amazement. Thus, their plan to entrap Jesus had failed. Evil intents of the heart, when used to buffet the Lord, often come to naught.

The second question, which was concerning marriage after the resurrection, was asked by the Sadducees. We might note here, they were "The political party of the Jewish aristocratic priesthood from the time of the Maccabees to the final fall of the Jewish state. Their aim was the welfare of the state rather than the purity of the nation as a religious community." Christ replied to these Sadducees that in the resurrection there shall be no marriage, but all saved souls shall be as the angels in heaven. He reminded them of their ignorance of the Scriptures, and said, **God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.** Jesus turned them from their purpose of diverting him from his divine work in the Temple, and silenced them by showing them their weakness in spiritual matters.

The third question was addressed to Christ by a lawyer, a member of the Pharisees, in these words: **Master, which is the great commandment in the law?** It is well to note that the lawyers of that day studied, of course, the Pentateuch as well as the other books of the Old Testament. Their sphere of activities covered the law as it was contained in the Scriptures, or as it was handed down by tradition. They gave instructions in the law, interpreted it, and acted as judges. In reply to this question, Jesus had an adequate and frank answer. He, going to the root of the problem presented by the lawyer, brought out a great truth. Christ stated the great principle of love which everyone owes to God in the first place, and in the second to his fellow-man. He said to the lawyer, **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.** Thus the universal principle of love is the basis for all law and the teachings of the pro-

phets. In this wonderful reply to the Pharisees, Christ emphasized, for all time, the need of all people living lives of loving service to God and also exercising true relationships to their fellow-man.

FOR DISCUSSION: What made these groups of questioners so viciously determined to entangle Jesus? How did he so wonderfully show himself to be their superior? Are these questions which they brought to Jesus vital today for our consideration?

II. "WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?" (Matthew 22:41-46)

As the Pharisees were standing around, Jesus asked them this pointed question: **What think ye of Christ?** Now it was the Lord's time to question them. They had been trying to entangle him, but now he uses a good question to draw them out, or to put them to open shame and further ridicule. So they answered him by saying, **The son of David.** This was the only answer possible for the Jews to give Jesus. They knew the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah who was to be born of David. As references to this prophecy, the student is referred to 2 Samuel 7:12-17; Psalm 89:20-37; and Isaiah 9:7. Note further in verses 43, 44, and 45 of Matthew 22 how Jesus, with further questions, rendered them speechless for the moments; for **no man was able to answer him a word,** verse 46.

Moreover, they ceased to ask him further questions. The refusal of these men, though skilled in the law, to answer Jesus' question in the light of Old Testament scriptures showed definitely two things: (1) the superiority of Christ over them; and (2) their unwillingness to admit the whole truth concerning the coming Messiah, or they were not fully acquainted with the scriptures on this point. When men approach God with evil purposes in their hearts, they are often brought to naught. Sins of deception and

intrigue perpetrated by the individuals or groups of individuals will sooner or later condemn them before God.

FOR DISCUSSION: Why did Jesus' questioners go away silenced? What do people think of Christ today?

III. CHRIST'S DENUNCIATION OF THE PHARISEES (Matthew 23:1-36)

Following the previous study, we come now to Christ's bitter denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees found in chapter twenty-three. Since it is asserted by Bible scholars that this is the last message which Jesus ever spoke to the Jewish people as a while, it might be called the chapter of the Tragic Crisis of all Jesus had spoken to Israel. To his disciples and the multitude, Jesus spoke boldly of the false pretenses and the outward show of religion which these hypocritical Pharisees displayed among the people. They sought high places in the synagogues to be seen of men; they sat in Moses' seat, so to speak; they were known for their much speaking and long prayers; and they taught out of the law that which is good, but their own lives were mere pretenses of righteousness.

In this connection there is one word, "phylacteries," which may need explaining. Phylacteries were "two small leather cases, worn on the forehead and on the left arm opposite the heart, kept in position by leather straps. Inside of these cases were slips of parchment on which were written, (Exodus 13:1-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21), the passages which were supposed to enjoin the wearing of the phylacteries. In Hebrew they were called tephillin, i. e., prayers; in Greek, phylacteries—amulets, charms, as they came to be superstitiously regarded as possessing a mystic power to protect the wearer against the influence of evil spirits."—Edward E. Anderson.

Jesus pronounced woes upon them for their false teachings, their standing in the way of others who would know the gospel truths, and for their devouring widows' houses. These woes may be listed, or classified as follows: (1) The woe against religious leaders who actually destroy the religious life of those who looked for spiritual guidance: (2) the woe against the passion for riches; (3) the woe against corrupt party spirit; and (4) the woe against spiritual blindness and moral stupidity. Christ called them hypocrites and blind guides which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. He called them serpents and the children of those who killed the prophets. He told them that the wrath of God would come upon them for all their wickedness. The destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jewish people forty years later fulfilled Christ's predictions of their calamity. In other ages people have suffered for their reproach to Almighty God. Man's sinful practices will find him out at the judgment if not in this life.

FOR DISCUSSION: Why did not these scribes and Pharisees challenge Jesus upon his bold accusations against them, and put him in prison then? Show why there is need today for plain gospel preaching to the self-righteous individuals and unchristian people?

IV. CHRIST'S LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM (Matthew 23:37-39)

These three closing verses of chapter twenty-three express Christ's sorrowful words of warning to the people of Jerusalem. The student is to study these three verses with deep meditation and careful thought of what Christ meant to convey to the human mind in these few sentences. His heart yearned for those people to repent, but they would not. He would have gathered them unto himself, but they, the masses of the Jews, refused to accept him as the Son of God.

They would not take him as the Christ, the Saviour of men. What mournful lament came to Jesus' heart! He said, **Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.** Death and destruction were to be visited, in God's own good time, upon the city. It was to reap punishment for the transgressions of its people. The student will note that perhaps it was only a few hours after these woes were pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees, and the lamentation over the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the mob took Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Jewish Sanhedrin brought him before Pilate to have him crucified. Such was their answer to

his condemnations of their corrupt lives and his warning concerning the future of Jerusalem. Sin and Satan oppose the ways of righteousness, and bring people to want and destruction for their transgressions.

FOR DISCUSSION: What prevented Christ from gathering all Jerusalem unto himself? Why should Jesus lament today over hard-hearted and unbelieving people of the Christian religion?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: How Should the Christian Spirit Be Made Manifest? Luke 10:25-37; Genesis, chapters 44 and 45; Acts 27:21-44; 28:1-11.

LESSON VIII

FEBRUARY 25, 1940

Stewards in the Kingdom

(Matthew 24 and 25)

Golden Text: Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Matthew 25:21.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 25: 14-27

(Authorized Version)

14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one: to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained besides them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed;

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant,

thou knewest that I reap where I sowed
not, and gather where I have not strawed:
27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put

my money to the exchangers, and then
at my coming I should have received
mine own with usury.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Tuesday of Passion Week, A. D. 30.

Place: The Mount of Olives.

Persons: Jesus and his disciples.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Jeremiah 26:18; Micah 3:12.

T.—Mark 13:3-8; 1 Thess. 5:1-4.

W.—Jeremiah 14:14; 23:21.

T.—Acts 4:2,3; Revelation 2:10, 13.

F.—Hebrews 3:6, 14; Romans 10:18.

S.—Luke 17:26; 1 Peter 3:20.

S.—Luke 12:39; 2 Peter 3:10; Rev. 3:3.

THE INTRODUCTION

Christ gave the teachings of this lesson to his disciples on the Mount of Olives which is a short distance from Jerusalem. There on the Mount and away from the multitude Jesus uttered the prophetic words to his disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the age, and his second return. The class will find in this study the deep sacredness expressed in these teachings which Christ meant his followers should know before his crucifixion. Through proper study of the lesson, each student will be drawn, we believe, into a closer spiritual relationship with Jesus, and will get a deeper impression of his wonderful love for mankind.

I. JESUS DIVERTS THE MINDS OF THE DISCIPLES FROM TEMPORAL THINGS (Matthew 24:1-4)

In our previous lesson, Christ closed his wonderful teachings on Tuesday afternoon in the Temple. Today's lesson opens with Jesus and his disciples leaving Jerusalem. When they were some distance from the city, his disciples, looking back and marveling at the wonderful

buildings of the Temple, called Jesus' attention to them. In spite of the fact that they had heard Jesus' masterful teachings that day before the scribes, the Pharisees, and the multitude, they turned their attention upon the temporal and material things made by man. Think of the twelve disciples who had been with Jesus for three years, and who had listened to his spiritual teachings how, at the closing of a most eventful day in the Temple area with their Master, allowed themselves to turn to admire man's works. It is an instance, or example, of how men are prone to think of material things when the spiritual should hold first place in their lives. But Jesus immediately informed them that the buildings which they were admiring would be destroyed. He said: **There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.** He understood their thoughts as they were admiring man's art, as shown in the fine buildings, and he drew their minds upon the fact that destruction would be visited upon the Temple and Jerusalem. These words changed their thoughts, and a short while later that evening as they were approaching the Mount of Olives, they asked Jesus to tell them when those things would occur. **Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?** These questions show that the disciples had now turned their minds upon three great thoughts. These questions gave them some concern. The truth is, they have troubled the minds of

men in every age. They did not trouble Jesus, for he knew the answers before he uttered them.

Jesus answered the first question in these words, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh," (Luke 21:20). Let the student read Mark 13:14; Daniel 9:26, 27; 12:7; Romans 11:25 for additional information on this point. History tells us that Titus, the Roman Emperor at that time, visited with a great Roman army Jerusalem A. D. 70, just forty years after this prophecy of Jesus and destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem with fire and sword. Consequently, great death and destruction came to the Jews of the city at the hands of the Roman soldiers. Blindness and hardness of heart of Israel as to the truths of the Scriptures and their rejection of Christ as the Son of God brought God's judgment upon them.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: How should the teachings of this prophecy of Jesus be considered today by Christian believers? What does God have to say about those who wilfully ignore his Holy Word?

II. EVENTS LEADING TO THE END OF THIS AGE (Matthew 24:9-26)

We recall in verse three and note the third question of the disciples how they asked Jesus when the end of the world should be. This topic will be given to the discussion of the events which Christ said would take place before the end of the world. On the Mount of Olives Christ related to his disciples the things that would come to pass before the end. He said many would come in his name, declaring that they were the Christ, and deceiving many people. History has shown that many have come, claiming to be the Christ, since Jesus uttered these prophecies to his disciples. Such claims

proved later on their untruthfulness. Jesus told his disciples to take heed and be not deceived. He said be not troubled, for wars and pestilence would come. History, again, proves Christ's declarations to be true, because nations, great and small, through greed, jealousy, the spirit of conquest, and desire for power, have waged wars for the past two thousand years. Sin and Satan have been the agents of turmoil and strife among the races of the earth. In the World War, and even today, nations have risen against nations. Famines, droughts, plagues, and diseases have fallen upon the different people of the earth, as Christ prophesied, during the past centuries. Earthquakes have come in different parts of the earth and people, in certain places, have suffered as a result of the upheavals. Jesus said the time would come when they would be hated, delivered up by one another. James, Stephen and the apostle Peter were put to death at the hands of those who were bitter against them. History declares that, during the past centuries, such things have happened to many others who were loyal to Christ. Men have been cast into prison and died at the stake for Christ's sake.

Christ said many false prophets would arise, showing great signs and performing wonders, and that they would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. He said many would be led astray by their false teachings. He told them that iniquity would abound, and that the love of many would wax cold—become indifferent toward God. But Jesus assured his disciples that "he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved," verse 13. He spoke of the "great tribulation," and the "tribulations of those days." Jeremiah 30:7 speaks of "the time of Jacob's trouble, and Daniel 12:1 speaks of "a time of trouble." Portions of chapters 1, 2 and 7 of the book of Revelation are devoted to the description of this period. Romans 2:9; 5:3; 8:35;

and 12:12 speak of tribulation upon the Jews and the Gentiles, but patience, faith and prayer are enjoined upon all. May we realize how such a tribulation period can quickly come upon the world when several of the great nations of the earth are now in bloody conflicts, and others are preparing armaments with great speed for protection and devastation. The end of the age has not yet come, nor do we know how long it will last, or how soon it will end. We are told that even the angels in heaven do not know when the Son of man shall appear, but we are assured of the fact that the prophecies of Jesus are being fulfilled as fast as time passes.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: Ask certain members of the class to tell what they have learned from their study of the scripture references given in this topic. In view of the fact that these prophecies are coming to pass, what should all Christians strive to do?

III. THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS (Matthew 24:27-31)

The second great question which the disciples asked Jesus on the Mount of Olives that day was **What shall be the signs of thy coming?** In verse twenty-nine Jesus said that **immediately after the tribulation of those days** the sun would be darkened, the moon would not give light, the stars would fall, and the powers of heaven would be shaken. Daniel tells in chapter 7, verses 9 to 12 of his vision: He saw the throne; the judgment was set; the books were opened; and he heard a great voice cry out. The great beast was slain and cast into the flames. Verse 30 of Matthew 24 states that the Son of man shall appear, and Mark says in chapter 13, verse 26, "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." In Revelation 1:7 we read, "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every

eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." The angels will be sent with great sound of the trumpet, (1 Corinthians 15:52; I Thessalonians 4:16). The elect shall be gathered together from the four corners of the earth.

"Very fitly therefore shall there be the sound of a trumpet at the last day, when the general assembly shall be called, when the praises of God shall be gloriously celebrated, when sinners shall fall as sacrifices to divine justice, and when the saints shall enter upon their eternal jubilee."—Matthew Henry Commentary, Volume V.

IV. THE WAY PEOPLE SHOULD LIVE (Matthew 24:32— 25:1-30)

How should people live while waiting for the Lord to return? What should be their attitude toward this life and the life to come? We believe these questions are worthy of careful consideration as the student studies this topic. Now, following the study of Christ's second coming, let us notice some of the things which Jesus emphasized in verses 42 to 51. Jesus said, **Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.** Since no one knows the hour of his return, not even the angels in heaven, we are commanded to be ready. Christ here warns against carelessness, indifference to religious worship, and all conduct contrary to the will of God. The true and faithful servants of the Master shall be counted blessed, verse 46. Christians who prove faithful to God and to their fellow-man are promised the heavenly reward (Matthew 25:21, 23). He who endures to the end shall be saved. On the other hand, if men shall ignore God, treat unjustly their fellow-man, and continue in the ways of the world, they will be condemned when the Lord returns. Unpreparedness, whether spiritual or in a material sense, means disappointment and

failure in the end. True waiting for Christ's return means living the Christ-like life as a true child of God. Christians are to deny themselves of the things that are corruptible in the sight of God, and to take up their cross and follow the Master in the straight and narrow way (Mark 8:34).

The Parable of the Ten Virgins, chapter 25, verses 1 to 14, teaches some fine spiritual truths as to the way people should live. This parable illustrates the kingdom of heaven. The Lord Jesus is the bridegroom, (see Ps. 45; Matthew 24: 31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16), and his Church is the bride. The virgins are likened unto professors of religion. They were to be ready to meet the bridegroom. Certain conditions had to be met by all ten virgins. Sincere and prepared Christians are the wise virgins, bearing the necessary oil of salvation with them at all times. Hypocrites, false professors of Christ, on the other hand, are the foolish virgins, going through life not fully prepared, with their lights going out. Note, when the bridegroom came they were not admitted to the marriage supper. They had failed to meet the necessary requirements, their lights were failing for the lack of oil. This teaches us that we are to be prepared, ready expectants of the Lord, and of his second coming. We are to be, therefore children of light at all times, having the light of the Gospel in our hearts. We are to shine by holding forth this Gospel light (Philippians 2:15, 16). Continuous and joyful services in the work of the Lord is the way Christians should live, loving God with their whole heart and serving their fellow-man in the spirit of brotherly love.

V. THE JUDGMENT AFTER CHRIST'S RETURN

Verses thirty-one to the end of the chapter tell of a judgment scene which shall take place when the Son of man shall come in his glory. May we note

here what Dr. James M. Gray has had to say of this scene.

"It is a judgment scene, but not the last judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). The object of the judgment is the Gentile nations of the earth. The time is after the church has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and when he has come for the gathering of the remnant of Jerusalem at the end of this age. . . . There is no resurrection here, no books opened, and nothing said about the dead, all of which is in contrast to the last judgment. Moreover, three classes are present here, sheep, goats, and 'my brethren', the test being not the possession of eternal life, but the treatment, accorded by the nations to these 'brethren.' The latter are the 'Jewish remnant who have preached the gospel of the kingdom to all nations during the tribulation.' Examine Zechariah 14:1-5 and Joel 3 for light upon this judgment scene."—James M. Gray in Peloubet's Notes.

The student is referred to the following scripture references for study of the Great White Throne Judgment: Daniel 2:35; 12:1; Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6; 14:12; 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55; 2 Peter 3:7, 10, 11; Revelations 6:8; 19:5, 20; 20: 11-15; 21:7, 8.

We note in this description given in verses 31 to 46 that all persons shall be judged in that final day by Jesus, the righteous judge. Those that have done good, lived Christian lives by serving the Lord, will be counted blessed. Their reward shall be eternal life in that kingdom prepared for them. Jesus said, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Their faithfulness to the cause of Christ in loving service to God and to their fellow-man while on earth gave them the heavenly reward. By their works of righteous living they were counted faithful servants, and worthy of the eternal reward (James 2:

15-18). Those who endure to the end shall be saved. But, how different it will be with the unfaithful! Think what judgment shall come against them for their neglect of so great salvation! Hear the judgment pronounced against them: **Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.** Note, the judge will reward, both the faithful and the unfaithful, according to their works (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Revelation 22:12). Let each member of the class take these gospel truths to heart,

and pledge Almighty God his loyalty and faithfulness, ever to serve him so long as he shall live.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Who is to be the great judge, and on what basis shall all individuals be judged? What part do a person's religious works play in his obtaining his final reward?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Stewardship of Christian Service. Scripture references: Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:13-27.

LESSON IX

MARCH 3, 1940

In the Upper Room

(Matthew 26: 1-30)

Golden Text: This do in remembrance of me. I Corinthians 11: 24.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 26: 17-30

(Authorized Version)

17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it:

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: The Passover and the Lord's Supper occurred on Thursday night of Pas-

sion Week, April 6, A. D. 30. The anointing of Jesus by Mary in the house of Simon occurred either on Saturday night, April 1, or Tuesday evening, April 4.

Place: The anointing by Mary of the body of Jesus took place in Bethany, a village just over the ridge on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives. The scenes in the remainder of the chapter occurred in Jerusalem.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples, and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mark 14:1; Luke 22:1; John 13:1.

T.—Mark 14:10; Luke 22:3; John 13:2, 20.

W.—Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:26; John 17:12.

T.—1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-25.

F.—Exodus 24:8; Jeremiah 31:31; Romans 5:15; Hebrew 9:22.

S.—Mark 14:43; Luke 22:47; Acts 1:16.

S.—Mark 13:33; Luke 22:40, 46; Ephesians 6:18.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson on the Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper should interest the members of the class, for it is one of the great studies found in the Bible. It sets forth the important events of the last night which Jesus had with his disciples. It shows that they received from the institution of the supper and the discourse of Jesus a greater understanding of his power and wisdom. The student will find spiritual food for thought, and a deep meaning in all that took place in the Upper Room that night between Jesus and his disciples.

I. HOW THE JEWS PLANNED THE DEATH OF JESUS

The chief priests, scribes and Pharisees and elders assembled in the palace of the high priest Caiaphas to consult together how they might take Jesus by surprise and have him killed. They had sought means on different occasions to entangle him in his speech to bring about his early death, but their plots had failed. Note, however, when one plan had failed, they did not give up but began to formulate new schemes to entangle him,

and to have the death sentence pronounced against him. It is true Satan makes his attacks upon people in various ways, nor does he give up when his first enticements fail, but he attacks repeatedly to accomplish his purposes. We note that the psalmist foretold this plotting of the Jews against Jesus; namely, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalms 2:2, 3).

Judas Iscariot secretly bargained with these Jewish plotters for thirty pieces of silver to deliver Jesus into their hands. Think what treachery, what treasonous act of one of Christ's followers! Think how Satan led him to open the way, and he led the howling mob to take Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane that night! What perfidy enacted against the Son of God! Relative to his price for betraying his Master, Zechariah says, "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price: and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver," chap. 11, vs. 12. These thirty silver shekels were less than five English pounds, and less than twenty-five dollars in American money. Note, this sum was about the price of a slave in that day. Why did Judas do this treacherous act? Some Bible scholars think he committed the crime because he hated Christ and wanted to see him put to death, but most of all he did it because he loved money and would stoop to commit any crime, no matter how serious, if it would add to his possessions. There have been some

men in all ages who have stooped to criminal acts for filthy lucre. But think how a human heart could stoop to commit such a treacherous thing, when he had been taught for three years the divine truths by his Lord! It was a direct, deliberate insult to Christ, to his disciples and to the world. It shows how mean, how treacherous a person, though apparently faithful and trustworthy, can be when he is possessed with selfish motives which are secretly set against his fellow-man. He was guilty of unfaithfulness, and of being willing to offer up his Lord for the "unrighteous mammon" spoken of in Luke 16:11.

Selfish desires of evil intent are directed by Satan and his servants to lead individuals to carry out their selfish purposes. The evil forces which were clamoring for Christ's blood were operating through, and directed by the Devil himself. The howling Jews, given direct assistance by Judas the son of perdition, relentlessly pursued their purpose with all the vigor and hatred of a mad band of rioters to put Jesus to death. When they had taken him in the Garden of Gethsemane, they rushed their case before the high priest first, and then, to be sure of their wishes being accomplished, they took him before Pilate urging in emphatic and acrimonious terms to have Jesus crucified. Truth and innocence, justice and mercy in the person of Christ was viciously brought to trial at the hands of malice and open injustice. False testimonies, blasphemous expostulations, and cries of "Crucify him! Crucify him!" moved Pilate to yield to their clamor for his death on the cross. Howling mobs of sinful men have in other ages sent true servants of the living God to their tragic and ignominious death.

FOR DISCUSSION: Why did Judas secretly give aid to the Jews against his Lord? When the mob took Jesus that night, why did they not put him to death themselves? Why did Pilate yield to

their cries and why did he deliver Jesus to the soldiers to crucify him?

II. THE JEWISH PASSOVER AND THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The members of the class will find the record of the Lord's Supper recorded in Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-30; and in John's gospel 13:1-30. All of these references should be carefully studied in connection with this topic.

We note first, the Jewish Passover was that feast celebrated each year in commemoration of the night when the Israelites were freed from their Egyptian bondage by the passing over of the angel of death. The first-born of every family was slain that night in Egypt except those on whose door posts was the sign of the sprinkled blood (Exodus 12). During and before Christ's day this feast was celebrated each year by the Jews, and many living in Judaea and in other surrounding districts came in great numbers to Jerusalem to observe this occasion. The time of the year for the beginning of this celebration was, according to Josephus and Dr. William Smith, LL. D., on the 14 of Nisan, or April 5th, and it continued to the 21st, or for eight days. The Passover was not only commemorative, but it was also a type; that is to say, "The deliverance which is commemorated was a type of the great salvation it foretold." The Paschal Lamb was regarded as the leading feature in the observance of this festival. The lamb slain typified Christ, the "Lamb of God," slain for the sins of the world.

"The exact time appointed in the law for killing the Paschal lamb was on the 14th of Nisan 'between the evenings' or about sunset. . . . The feast or Days of unleavened bread, did not properly begin till after sunset and the Paschal meal, so that the 15 of Nisan was the first day of the feast. But, as all leaven

was scrupulously removed about noon on the 14th, in preparation for the Feast, it was not unnatural to call this 'the day,' or as Matthew and Mark have it, 'the first day of unleavened bread.' So Josephus, in one place, makes the 14th of Nisan (Thursday) the first day of the feast, which he elsewhere fixes to the 15th, and he assigns eight days as its duration. These considerations afford great help in deciding the important question: Was the supper which our Lord ate with his disciples on the Thursday evening the true Paschal Supper, or did the latter fall on the following evening, the same as that of his crucifixion?"—Dr. William Smith, LL. D., *History of the Bible*.

But let us study what St. John recorded on the subject of the time of the Lord's Supper in chapter 13. In verse one we regard the meaning to be that, before the feast of the Passover had come, Jesus knew the hour for his trial and crucifixion was near, and that he, having loved his disciples before, he still loved them to the end. In other words, "Before the Passover," and in prospect of his approaching departure, Jesus' love was actively called forth toward them, and that he gave proof of his love even to the end. In verse 29, "Buy those things that we have need of against the feast," it is thought by some students of the Bible that this referred to the Chagigah, and the usual day for sacrificing the Chagigah was on the 15th of Nisan, which was then commencing. In chapter 19, verse 14, the term, "The preparation of the Passover," at the first consideration would seem as if it must be the preparation of the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, or Thursday. But here is what a noted Bible scholar has to say: "This seems to be essentially connected with the Sabbath itself" (John 19:31).—Dr. William Smith, LL. D. See Mark 15: 42; Deuteronomy 21:23; St. John 19:42. Thus the phrase in John 19:14 may mean the preparation of the Sabbath which fell

in the Passover week. Hence, the day of the preparation mentioned in the Gospels possibly fell on the day of the Holy Convocation which is the 15th of Nisan (Friday), the day before the Jewish Sabbath. Again we read John 19:31, "The Sabbath day was a high day." We might surmise that any Sabbath occurring in the Passover week was considered with the Jews as "a high day," thus deriving importance from the Feast. But special importance of this day very probably resulted from its being that day on which the Omer (the tenth of an ephah) was offered, and from which was counted the fifty days to the Pentecost.

We turn now to a discussion of the Lord's Supper. Jesus sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to a certain man whom we believe was a close friend of the Master. It is very likely that he was John Mark. This man showed the two disciples a large upper room furnished and in proper order. Relative to this place where the Lord celebrated his supper, Dr. Darwell Stone has the following to say: "It is possible that the room in an unspecified house in Jerusalem where the disciples met after the resurrection (Mark 16:14 and Luke 24:34-36), and the upper-room chamber where they were abiding after the ascension (Acts 1:13), were the same as the upper room in which the Lord's Supper took place; and that that, again, was in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12.)"

When even was come, he sat at meat with his disciples. It is striking that the Lord spoke first, not of the meaning of the feast, but of the terrible fact that one of the disciples would betray him before the night would be over. Such a statement from the Master's lips pierced their hearts with sorrow, and they cried out, Lord, is it I? But how did Judas feel when he knew that he had already plotted with the Jewish schemers to sell

his Lord and Master. In his heart he knew his secret sin. Think how the other eleven pondered over Jesus' words in their hearts, wondering which one of the twelve would do such a treacherous act. But, note, even Judas inquired, as a method to hide his black sin from the others, **Master, is it I?** Yes, it was sufficient to tell Judas that he knew the one. Jesus knew the evil in Judas' heart, and that he was unclean.

In instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, and gave to his disciples, saying, **Take, eat, this is my body.** Also Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, **Drink ye all of it.** He told them that the wine was the symbol of his blood which would be shed for the sins of many. The "remission of sins" means the cancellation of sins, the blotting out the record of sins for all redeemed persons. It simply means the forgiveness of sins. These moments which Jesus and his disciples spent in the Upper Room at the Lord's Table were solemn, because Jesus knew in a few hours Judas would betray him, Peter would deny him, and the other disciples would be scattered. He came as King, but would soon be offered up on the cross as a sacrifice. Remember, he arose from supper, girded himself with a towel, poured water in a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. (St. John 13:4-15). According to one Bible scholar, "He at once enforced the lesson, and gave to them a proof of his love enduring to the end, by girding himself with a towel and washing their feet, the most humble of all menial services. . . .When Jesus told him (Peter) that this washing was a sign of union to him, he exclaimed, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.' Our Lord's reply taught the distinction between the washing which renews the nature and that which needs daily repetition to cleanse from daily pollution, and he added, 'Ye are clean, but not all' for

Judas had been a partaker of the rite."
—Dr. William Smith, LL. D., *History of the Bible.*

There are three things which we need to remember concerning our Lord's Supper; namely, (1) It was a commemoration, "This do in remembrance of me"; (2) communion, the Lord's disciples shall through the ages sit down and take the bread and the wine; (3) it was a covenant, declaring that all who shall be redeemed through his shed blood shall be made one with him. May we note, the old passover feast was the feast of the exodus of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, which was a feast of hope; but the New, the Christian Passover, is the feast of the Saints with their risen Lord. May all Christians seek to observe this Christian Passover, the Lord's Supper, as often as it is possible for them to take the sacraments.

FOR DISCUSSION: How does Christ show in this lesson his supernatural knowledge? What are the significant parts of the Lord's Supper, and what do they symbolize?

III. THEY SANG A HYMN AND WENT OUT TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES (Matthew 26:30)

In connection with the Paschal meal the Jews were accustomed to sing Psalms 113 to 118. These psalms were called the "Great Hallel," praises to the Lord. Just so, when the Lord's Supper was over, and when he had finished his discourses and his intercessory prayer in the presence of his disciples, they joined in singing an hymn probably the "Great Hallel." Note, the student should read over these psalms, 113 to 118, several times, getting the spiritual significance of their use at the Jewish Passover. Also it is interesting to study these psalms in connection with this closing scene in the Upper Room, remembering that Jesus himself took part in the singing.

"Singing of psalms is a gospel-ordinance. Christ's removing the hymn from the close of the Passover to the close of the Lord's Supper plainly intimates that he intended that ordinance should continue in his Church."—**Matthew Henry Commentary Volume V.**

It is very proper, after celebrating the Lord's Supper, for all Christians to join in singing an hymn of praise to God. It should be an expression of joy in God through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Although the disciples were in sorrow over the approaching death of their Master,

and Christ was about to enter upon his intense suffering, yet they could sing an hymn of praise together to Almighty God. Likewise our spiritual joy should not be interrupted by outward afflictions. Hymns of praise to God often drive away the deepest grief and the greatest disappointments.

FOR DISCUSSION: What type of songs should be used in church services?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Mary Anoints the Lord, Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:2-8.

LESSON X

MARCH 10, 1940

Gethsemane: Triumph Through Surrender

(Matthew 26: 30-56)

Golden Text: Not as I will, but as thou wilt. Matthew 26: 39.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 26: 36-46

(Authorized Version)

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39 And went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What! could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Thursday, April 6, A. D. 30.

Place: On the way to Gethsemane and in the garden of Gethsemane, on the western slope of the Mount of Olives.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples, the mob, and officers.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34;
 John 13:36-38.
 T.—Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46.
 W.—Mark 14:43-50; Luke 22:47-53.
 F.—Zechariah 13:7; John 16:32.
 T.—John 12:27; 13:1; Acts 1:16.
 S.—2 Samuel 20:9.
 S.—Mark 13:33; Ephesians 6:18.

THE INTRODUCTION

The setting for this lesson is in the Garden of Gethsemane at the late hour of the night. Jesus and his disciples had gone there after the Upper Room supper was over, where he entered the garden to pray. The student will find this study one of pathos, and one of great concern for every student of the Bible. The truths and teachings here laid down in the scripture references should be carefully studied for a clearer understanding of this tragic scene.

I. CHRIST TELLING HIS DISCIPLES
OF THEIR COWARDICE

In definite terms Jesus told his disciples that Thursday night, as they went out to the Mount of Olives, that they would flee from him. He said the shepherd would be smitten and the sheep would be scattered abroad. This meant, their Shepherd would be taken by cruel men, and that they would run away from him. Jesus here was foretelling his disciples the things that would occur in just a few short hours. What he was saying was that they were to be prepared and ready to stand the test, since they had been faithful to him for three years, but Jesus knew the one who would betray him, for Judas had already gone before to get the mob, also he knew Peter would deny him, and that the others would through fear scatter apart.

Remember, Christ said, **All ye shall be offended because of me this night.** As Christ had before foretold his disciples of

future events to happen, so here he told them that they would, for the lack of courage and stability, all be frightened that night. During the moments of betrayal and capture of the Master they would be offended and would flee from him. Sudden temptations and trials come to disciples of Christ to test their strength and stability. But Jesus here did not rebuke his disciples, but gave them a solemn warning of what was coming that night. Satan is always busy to strike at the most opportune time to effect his purposes. Note here, all eleven ran away, as Jesus a few moments before said they would do. Satan and his band of servants were too great for their strength and courage. So it is today with us, we have need to be prepared, through faith and determination, to withstand the trials, persecutions and offences that confront us. We are to ever be on guard, for we know not how soon tempestuous storms will come (Proverbs 27:1).

Again, Jesus told his disciples that the shepherd would be smitten, quoting from Zechariah 13:7. Christ himself was that Shepherd who was soon to be betrayed, taken captive, tried and crucified on the cruel cross, but he had previously informed them that he would rise from the grave, and would see them again. On that night he said, **After that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.** Thus, they had the promise of seeing him in a little while as the risen Lord.

Note here, Peter boasted of his self-confidence, and declared that he would not forsake his Lord, though all others should leave him. He was trusting in his own strength. When Christians rely upon their own powers, then they begin to show their weakness. No one can be too sure of his immunity from the allurements of Satan. But Jesus told Peter that he would not only be offended and flee, but also he would deny him. To run away from one whom a person has been

following, and has believed in as a great character, shows simple cowardice, but to deny ever having known the person is to admit the blackest falsehood. This is what Peter did that night which Jesus had said he would do. Peter declared that he would die with him before he would deny him. Some people are that way today; they will declare that they will go all the way with Jesus, and yet lose faith and become lukewarm, having lost their first love for the Gospel (Revelation 3:16). Note these three things about Peter: (1) his promise never to be offended in Christ; (2) how he considered himself better armed against offences than anyone else; and (3) how he showed his human weakness when the test came. He did not know himself, nor does anyone know how great is his weakness until he is severely tried and tested by the powers of Satan. Accordingly, may we get a lesson here from Peter's undoing, and fortify ourselves with a living faith in God against the temptations and offences thrust upon us by the Devil himself.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Christ forewarn his disciples of their desertion of him that night? If Peter was honest in his convictions, why did he deny his Lord? What lesson is taught here for all Christians?

II. CHRIST'S AGONY IN GETHSEMANE

The Garden of Gethsemane was located, beyond the river of Kidron, on the Mount of Olives (John 18:1). It was not far from Jerusalem, and the name itself means "oil press," a place like a wine press where they trod the olives (Micah 6:15). Jesus and the eleven disciples came to the garden late that night where he began his passion. Taking Peter, James and John with him, he left the eight at the entrance of the garden, saying, *Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder*. Into the garden he went with

the three to pray. "He took these three with him, because they had been the witnesses in his Transfiguration (Chapter 17:1, 2), and that would prepare them to be the witnesses of his agony."—*Matthew Henry Commentary, Volume V*. Let us remember these words, "If we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him." Note, he began to be sorrowful, and very heavy, and said to them, *My soul is exceedingly sorrowful (encompassed with grief), even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me*. Luke calls this condition of Jesus agony (Chapter 22:44). It was a conflict from within his very soul. He prayed earnestly, with great drops of sweat—as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Now it is being fulfilled as was spoken in Psalm 22:14, "I am poured out like water, . . . My heart is like wax, it is melted." As God loved him because he gave his life for his sheep, so now he is subject to his Father's will in this agony. He said, *Not my will, but thine be done*. It is true, Jesus prayed, saying, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*. Yes, the cup of pain and suffering Jesus dreaded in the sense as man dreads the sting of death, but he was willing to abide by the will of the heavenly Father. No one can fathom all that the Christ suffered that night in the garden. Note, all this suffering which he was about to endure was because of sin in the world. Although he lived utterly apart from sin, yet in his death he was made actually sin for us; that is, he bore our sins for us. Truly he was entering into his passion that night for us.

Jesus left the three to watch while he went a little further within to pray. Here, as on other momentous occasions, Jesus went aside to pray to Almighty God. But the three disciples, tired and sleepy, failed to watch as he prayed. Note Jesus' words, *Could ye not watch with me one hour?* In these words is a

tone of sadness as he discovered that they were sleeping. We wonder if Christ today is not grieved in the Spirit when he finds so many professed followers of his sleeping, allowing the enemy of the cause of righteousness to smite his Church. Jesus told them to watch and pray, be alert as to what shall happen, and pray for strength and courage to stand resolute, lest they should enter into temptation. Let us get a lesson here. The fact that **the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak**, is sufficient reason why we should be ever watchful and prayerful to avoid being tempted by the evil one. Jesus went the second time to pray. Later returning he found them sleeping as before. Remember, Jesus shows here the persistence in prayer while his disciples manifested weakness in watching and praying at this crucial moment of Christ's life. May we hope that this teaching of Jesus shall lay hold on every member of the class to the extent that each one will resolve to be ever watchful and prayerful through life.

Now, note the third time Jesus came to the three disciples, and what he said. **Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners**, verse 45. This verse is difficult, and has been explained in several different ways by Bible scholars. Dr. Alexander MacLaren has this to say, "He bids them to sleep on, since the hour is come, in sad recognition that the need for their watchful sympathy is past, and with it the opportunity for their proved affection." We believe these words were said with a tone of contemplative melancholy, and in a sense of regret—"too late, too late." Then note the sudden change, or transition here, when he said in verse 46, **Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me**. This was not a word of warning for their escape, as the mob with Judas was approaching, but a call to go with him to meet them. The disciples

were to stand by their Lord in the presence of his captors. When the enemy is approaching to combat the church of the living God, then every child of God should stand firm and true, having on the whole armor of God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask some member of the class to tell the ways in which Jesus here in this topic revealed himself infinitely stronger than, holier than, and in every way nobler than his most intimate disciples.

III. THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF JESUS (Matthew 26:47-50)

The betraying of Jesus with a kiss by Judas Iscariot is the most cruel and deceptive act, perpetrated against the Son of God, and recorded in the pages of holy writ. It is a truth, hypocrisy here gives birth to its most hideous child, and human nature revealed, in the dead hours of the night, its most horrible desires for the commitment of evil. Think how deceptive and base the human heart could be to place the bitter kiss upon the Savior's cheek! Thus, singling him out from the disciples standing around, Judas quickly betrayed his Lord and Master into the hands of sinful men. What a tragedy! But are there not people today who deny the Christ and speak blasphemy against his holy name? Taking the Lord's name in vain is common among some of the most intelligent people in the world. But note how Jesus spoke to Judas, **Friend, do that for which thou art come**. Jesus said, **Friend**; calling the traitor a friend in the hour of bitter trial. This the last effort of the divine patience which was offered to win back the traitor who was in the act of placing the kiss upon his Lord. Judas carried out his purpose to his own shame, and his tragic end which came a little later. We note, however, he became sorrowful, when it was too late, over his act, admitting his sin to the chief priests and eld-

ers, and then went out, and hanged himself. People of other ages have committed heinous crimes against their fellow-men, and like Judas, to find a way of escape, have committed suicide. Their sins, like his, found them out.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Was it for money alone that Judas betrayed Jesus?

IV. THE LAST TRAGIC MOMENTS IN THE GARDEN (Matthew 26:51-56)

As Jesus was being apprehended by the mob, Peter drew his sword in the defense of his Lord, and cut off the ear of Malchus who was servant of the high priest. But Christ told him to put up his sword, as this was no time for resistance. The Master told them that he could call upon the heavenly Father, and he would give me more than twelve legions of angels. But the scriptures must be fulfilled (Isaiah 53:7; Luke 24:25, 44). Jesus knew the cup of suffering must be drunk, and that the hour had come. In Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, we find that it was by suffering that Jesus is to conquer sin and Satan.

Then Jesus turned to the crowd that had come out to capture him, and said, **Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me?** When he taught in the temple, they did not even approach him to arrest him. But now, knowing he was not a revolutionist, not a man with armed force, and not one who was given to violence, they had come out armed against him as though he were a robber, a thief, an impostor, to seize him at the dead hour of the night by armed force. This is the world's great example of armed force taking Innocence and Justice by force of Satanic power to do away with the Prince of Peace. But their putting the Son of God to death on the cross did not do away with Christianity, for Christ had said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against

his church. Satan makes his great attacks upon people when they are usually least expecting his most alluring enticements to get them to yield to him.

As Jesus had told his disciples, while on their way to the garden, that they would leave him, they fled out into the darkness from him at the tragic moment. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace. How true it is, Christ is often forsaken through fear—fear on the part of some on the account of criticism, fear of missing a good time, fear of having to sacrifice too much time, means and money for the Lord's cause. When the real test comes, many professed followers flee the Master as did the disciples that night. All Christians, however, should show the spirit of faithfulness as did old Job when he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." The world needs today more people like Job of old, people who will stand faithful under all trials and temptations, to the supreme God of the universe. The true test of any man is the ability to stand firm to the Christian faith, whatever storms of life may arise to confront him. The home, the family, the church of the living God, the principles that are right and go to make up the good of civilization—all these should be faithfully adhered to by men and women everywhere. God wants his people to obey the holy teachings of the Christ, and to put him first in their lives. The apostle Paul stood the test of a true soldier of the cross, counting it worthy to suffer the afflictions of this life for the crown of eternal life.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: What is necessary for all Christians to be able to stand up for the Lord in times of great temptations?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Christian Loyalty—Job 13:1-28; Acts 7:51-60; Acts 26:1-32; Hebrews 11:1-40.

LESSON XI

MARCH 17, 1940

Calvary: Triumph Through Sacrifice

(Matthew 26: 57— 27: 56)

Golden Text: He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Isaiah 53: 3.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 27: 33-50*(Authorized Version)*

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

36 And sitting down, they watched him there;

37 And set up over his head his accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.

48 And straightway one of them, ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: From very early Friday morning, April 7, perhaps as early as 1:00 A. M., to 3:00 P. M. the same afternoon, when Christ died.

Place: All these events took place in Jerusalem, or immediately adjacent to it.

Persons: Jesus, the Jewish leaders, Pilate, the soldiers and the crowd of people.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mark 14: 53-65; Luke 22: 54-65.

T.—John 18: 12-14 and 19-24.

W.—Mark 14: 66-72; Luke 22: 55-62.

T.—John 18: 25-27.

F.—Mark 15: 16-19; John 19: 1-3.

S.—Mark 15: 22-32; Luke 23: 33-42.

S.—John 19: 17-24.

THE INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. The steps are tragic, though interesting to the student who would follow the different events as recorded in the four Gospels. Peter's denial has a place in the midnight scene about the court, and should hold for the student truths worth careful consideration. Malice, hatred and the spirit of murder and revenge hold sway on the one hand, while innocence, peace and justice is pictured on the other side as the events take place, closing the tragic scene at Calvary.

I. THE TRIAL OF JESUS BEFORE THE JEWISH LEADERS (Matthew 26: 57-68)

This trial took place in the dead hours of the night before the assembled Jewish authorities. The scribes who were the principal teachers, and the elders who were the principal rulers of the Jewish church were assembled together for the purpose of condemning Jesus to death. John's Gospel gives the first trial of Jesus before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, which ends with these words, "Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest" (Read John 18:12-14 and 19-24). Caiaphas presided over the Sanhedrin, which was the highest court of the Jews in Jerusalem, and it is this trial before Caiaphas which is the first recorded in Matthew's Gospel. The chief priests, and elders, and all the council, assembled in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest, sought false witness against Jesus. This court of Jewish leadership, not only would allow anyone to testify against the Christ, but actually sought for false accusers that they might have an excuse to have him put to death. Truth and justice in the matter did not concern these court officials, but conviction by an unjust means would satisfy them. When malice, hatred and bitter enmity reign in the hearts of men of au-

thority against a person brought to trial, there is very little chance for fair-play and justice in the case. Note, when they first sought witnesses against Jesus, they found none. It was not so easy as they had thought at first, but finally two came, and falsely quoted Jesus' words, by saying, **This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days, verse 61.** These witnesses were wrong, for Jesus never said he would destroy the temple, meaning his body, but he did say, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2: 19-22). He spoke of their, the Jews, destroying it, meaning his body, and not that he would destroy it. Think how the agents of Satan seek, at every opportune moment, by false accusations to condemn the just. Many of the court records today in this nation are stained with false testimonies against innocent people. The Bible says evil men dig up mischief (Proverbs 16: 27).

When Jesus held his peace concerning the false statements made against him, the high priest blurted out, **I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.** Why should they ask this question when they knew the people were saying just the thing which Jesus was claiming? John the Baptist had declared this (John 1:34); so had Nathanael (John 1:49); also the disciples had confirmed it (Matthew 14:33); and Martha of Bethany believed that Jesus was the Son of God (John 11:27). Jesus answered the question affirmatively in these words, **Thou hast said. Your statement is correct. But Jesus went a little further, saying, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.** When Christ had made this reference to his second coming, the high priest rent his clothes, deeming Jesus' statement not only a reproach but also blasphemy against God. Thus, upon this statement,

he said, **What further need have we of witnesses?** He concluded that this was sufficient. **What think ye?** Readily they said he is guilty of death. It was a hasty conclusion.

Now, before entering upon the discussion of this trial, and condemnation of Jesus before Pilate, the Roman procurator or governor of Judea, let us study the denial of Peter.

FOR COMMENT: In what ways was the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin unjust? What spirit actuated the whole procedure by the chief priests and rulers?

II. PETER'S DENIAL OF HIS LORD (Matthew 26: 69-75)

A study of Peter's denial of his Lord is worthy of the student's careful thought for the lesson which it teaches. All four of the Gospels mention this incident. Remember that Jesus had told Peter, as they were on their way to Gethsemane that night, he would deny him. Now the time had come, while Jesus was before the council and on trial for this prophecy to be fulfilled. "If Peter had gone to his room to pray, instead of going into this open courtyard to warm himself, there would have been no possibility of his denying his Lord, because no one would have been near to tempt him to deny the Lord."—Peloubet's Notes. We believe fear of the crowd and concern of his own safety caused Peter to boldly deny his Master. Thus, he shrank from admitting that he was one of his disciples. He felt the danger of being apprehended by those about him in the court. Doubtless Peter recalled, for the moments while waiting, Jesus' warning that night of his danger, and his being in the midst of the wicked enemy of Jesus caused him to play safe, as he saw it. He may be represented as an idle spectator warming himself by the fire, and not as a loyal disciple standing by his Master on trial.

Knowing that Jesus was being tried before the Sanhedrin, he wanted to learn the decision, no doubt.

But, there is another point to be noted here, we believe, and that is Peter followed his Lord, though far off. Still some spark of love and concern lingered in his breast for His Master, or else why did he follow? Although he failed to go up and testify before the council in the behalf of his Lord, and show his colors, so to speak, he did wait on the outside. Perhaps, something possessed him with a desire to wait and see the results of the trial. He was interested in some way it would seem, but he felt, possibly, that there was nothing that he could do for Jesus. Yet, his Lord and our Lord was on trial for the sins of the world. Peter had denied him with his lips before the open fire that night in the presence of the crowd, but his spirit within held a spark of love for him. Then, when the crowing of the cock was heard, Peter remembered what Jesus had told him, and he went out and wept bitterly. He was sorry for his act. Men often have regrets in later years for the misdeeds which they committed in early life. People need courage, faith and the indomitable spirit to enable them to stand, in hours of greatest trial, true to the Christ. It is Satan's delight to make cowards of many of the followers of the true Christian faith. People should always fear God rather than man; that is to say, reverence, and obey and love him with the whole heart, standing faithful to the end.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: What possessed Peter to deny Jesus? Why did he wait while Jesus was being tried?

III. THE TRIAL OF JESUS BEFORE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR (Matthew 27:1, 2, and 11-26)

The chief priests and rulers of the Jews, knowing that they did not have the authority to put Jesus to death them-

selves, and after having condemned him before their council, **when morning was come**, they took him to Pontius Pilate to get his approval of the death sentence. As the Roman authorities exercised the right of pronouncing the death sentence, Pilate was the one to be the final judge in this case. Accordingly, when they led Jesus to the governor's palace, Pilate, after listening to the accusations of the Jews, proceeded to question the Master. He said, **Art thou the king of the Jews? Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? What have you to say in regards to the matter?** They say you are a blasphemer, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, a perverter of the nation, and calling yourself a king (Luke 23:2). But Jesus was silent to these accusations brought against him by the chief priests and rulers (Mark 15: 4, 5). His divine wisdom and power looked beyond their malicious and falsely framed schemes to bring him to his death. Silence is the exercise of wisdom oftentimes to the bitter attacks of Satan's crowd. Jesus knew further statements in his defense and concerning his purpose in the world would not change their clamor for his life. Note, Pilate **marveled greatly** at the Lord's silence. But the hour had come, and the scripture was about to be fulfilled concerning his death, which was according to the prophets.

Now, let us think Pilate had considered the matter thoughtfully, when he said to the chief priests and the people, **"I find no fault in this man"** (Luke 23: 4). His wife had sent word unto him, while on the judgment seat, saying, **Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this night in a dream because of him**, verse 19. Pilate had found no reason to have him put to death under the Roman law, and thus was ready to set Jesus free. But the Jews cried all the more to have him crucified.

Note just here what Saint Luke had to say of this matter. When Pilate learned that Herod Antipas had come from Galilee up to Jerusalem to the feast—**"a practice by which he was accustomed to conciliate the Jews"**—"He sent him to Herod. . . . He questioned with him in many words but he answered him nothing" (Luke 23:7-9). Here, again, Jesus was silent before his questioner. Note what Dr. William Smith has had to say in his **History of the Bible**; "Herod rejoiced at obtaining the interview which he had long sought in vain, and put many questions to Jesus, in the hope of his working some miracle. . . . Provoked, however, at receiving no answer, and seeing the vehemence of Christ's accusers, Herod with his soldiers made a mock of his regal claims, and sent him back to Pilate arrayed in the imperial purple." Luke further states that Herod **"Set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate,"** verse 11.

Since it was custom of that day for the Roman governor to set free some prisoner during the Passover Feast, these clamoring Jews, to carry their point further, persuaded the people to ask that Barabbas, a murderer and robber condemned to be put to death, be set free. Whereupon, Pilate replied, **What shall I do then with Jesus which is called the Christ?** I have found no fault in him. But they cried, **Let him be crucified**, verse 23. **Why, what evil hath he done?** Upon seeing that this reply availed nothing, Pilate proposed a strange compromise—to scourge him and let him go. But the loud cries of **"Crucify him, crucify him"** prevailed over reason and justice. Then, Pilate yielded to their cries, and washing his hands before the people, he uttered these words, **I am innocent of the blood of this just man: see ye to it**, verse 24. Hear their bitter reply, **"His blood be on us and on our children."** Think what an awful curse they brought

on themselves and on their children! Also think what a curse for this act still hangs upon their scattered race over the world today!

Now Jesus was turned over to the Roman soldiers who scourged him, put a purple robe on him, placed a crown of thorns on his head, and mocked him, while the Jews were saying "Away with him! crucify him!"

FOR CLASS COMMENT: What prompted Pilate to yield to the wishes of the Jews?

IV. JESUS CRUCIFIED ON CALVARY (Matthew 27:33-50)

The procession from Pilate's hall on the way to Calvary was a tragic scene. Jesus bearing his cross, the Roman soldiers marching close by his side, the chief priests, scribes and elders keeping close company, and the multitude with the lamenting women, all made a tragic picture as they went out to the place where the Son of God was to offer up his life for the sins of the world. From among this crowd of people came cries of grief and wailing for Christ's suffering, mingled with shrieks and shouts of railings against him by his accusers. What a gruesome sight, with all the mockery, it was as they led the blessed Lord to his ignominious death! Upon arriving at Golgotha, the soldiers nailed him on the cross with one criminal hanging on the cross at his right and one on his left. Thus, Christ was put to open shame on the middle cross between two malefactors before the multitude. The scripture was fulfilled, which said, "And he was numbered with the transgressors" (Mark 15: 28). The chief priests, scribes and elders railed on him, saying, If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him, verse 42. Others that passed by, together with the thieves on the cross,

railed on him, saying, Thou that destroyeth the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross. The women who loved him and the beloved disciple were standing by, overshadowed with grief and lamenting his sufferings on the cross.

The time of the crucifixion was the third hour, or around nine o'clock on Friday morning, the very time when the morning sacrifice was being offered by the Jewish worshipers. The period of darkness was from the sixth to the ninth hour, or from noon to three o'clock in the afternoon. This period of darkness over the earth represents "The gloom that weighed upon the Savior's soul, as he bore the whole burden of the divine wrath for the sins of all men."—Dr. William Smith. The Almighty power rent the rocks with the earthquake, and the veil in the Temple was rent from the top to the bottom, manifestations of the supernatural power of the Holy One.

The seven sayings of Jesus on the cross are remarkable for careful study by everyone. To his persecutors, Christ said in a prayer to God, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34). He could, in the hour of suffering and death, manifest the spirit of forgiveness to his accusers. To the malefactor on the cross who begged for remembrance of him when Jesus was to enter his kingdom, Christ said, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23: 43). Here is the evidence of penitence on the part of the thief, and the manifestation of forgiveness by our Lord. The beloved disciple, John, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus with other women, were standing by when Jesus said to her, "Woman, behold thy son," and to John, "Behold thy mother" (John 19: 26). His will that the beloved John should care for his mother was lovingly expressed by Jesus

in these tender words as he was about to part out of this life "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27: 46). This expression of Jesus is a mystery to man. Dr. Smith in his Bible History says, "To that awful mystery our only guide is in the words, with which at the ninth hour he broke the solemn silence, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?' words already used prophetically by David in the great Psalm which describes the Messiah's sufferings." Jesus said, "I thirst," thirsting, may we imagine, for the sins of the world,—expiring with a great desire for lost souls. He had paid the price when he said, "It is finished." It was the price of redemption, and he had

completed the works which God had sent him to earth to do. Note the perfect resignation of his soul to God in these words "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." May we also live day by day that we can honestly say, "Father, into thy hands we commit our souls."

FOR CLASS COMMENT: Let a member of the class describe the crucifixion scene. Discuss the seven sayings of Jesus on the cross.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Price of Christian Service—II Timothy 2: 10-17; 4: 5-8; Acts 9: 36-43; 16: 19-35.

LESSON XII

MARCH 24, 1940

The Sepulchre: Triumph over Death

(EASTER LESSON)

(Matthew 27: 57— 28: 1-15)

Golden Text: Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. I Corinthians 15: 20.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 27: 57— 28: 1-6

(Authorized Version)

57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:

58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.

60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

62 Now the next day, that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests

and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week,

came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: The burial of the body of Jesus took place sometime before six o'clock on Friday afternoon, April 7. The visit of the women to the sepulchre to anoint the body was early Sunday morning, April 9.

Place: Calvary and the near-by tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa were both near the walls of Jerusalem.

Persons: Roman soldiers, Joseph of Arimathæa, Nicodemus, the women and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 16: 21; 20: 19; Mark 8: 31.

T.—Mark 16: 1-11.

W.—Luke 23: 56—24: 1-12.

Th.—John 20: 1-18.

F.—Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2: 11.

S.—Matt. 26: 32; Mark 14: 28.

Su.—Matt. 28: 5-7; Acts 13: 34-35.

THE INTRODUCTION

The events of this lesson took place on Friday afternoon and Sunday following. The student will note the circumstances surrounding the burial, and those who took part in it. The resurrection scene offers interesting thought for everyone, and reveals, according to the Gospel writers, truths worthy of careful consideration by all people everywhere. The class is to note the events as they occurred step by step, seeing the divine hand of God at work in the fulfillment of the prophecy.

I. THE ENTOMBMENT OF THE BODY OF CHRIST (Matt. 27: 57-61)

Joseph of Arimathæa, a secret disciple of Jesus, went, when even was come, to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus for

burial. He was a man of means, of a refined mind, and of high social standing among the Jews, being a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Not thinking that Jesus was dead, Pilate sent soldiers to the cross to break the legs that he might die that evening, for it was known that some lived three and four days on the cross. But when the soldiers came, they found that Jesus was already dead. The great ordeal through which he had gone on Thursday night in the Garden of Gethsemane, the trial and scourgings before the rulers, the bearing his wooden cross on his shoulders part of the way to Golgotha, and the great agony on the cross with the spear thrust into his side—all rendered an early death to his exhausted body. Nicodemus assisted in the burial with the use of a mixture of myrrh and aloes with which they anointed the body after taking it from the cross, wrapping it in linen. Then they laid it in the new rock-hewn tomb which Joseph had made for himself. They then rolled a great stone against the door to secure the sepulchre. The prophecy was thus fulfilled concerning the Messiah, which said that he would make his grave "with the rich in his death" (Isaiah 53: 9).

The women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the sister of the Mother of Jesus, and others after seeing Christ's body laid in the tomb went home. This was late in the afternoon, therefore, they waited for the full performance of the funeral rites until after the Sabbath day; so "they rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

Since the chief priests and the Pharisees were fearful that the followers of Jesus might steal away his body from the tomb, in the pretence that he had arisen as he said that he would do, obtained Pilate's permission to set Roman soldiers at the tomb to guard it. Note, they wanted to be sure that his disciples could not secretly come and steal away his body, and then claim that Christ had come to life again. Man's watchful cares, however cunningly designed, to interfere with, or to thwart the divine purposes of God come to naught. Such activities of the enemies of Jesus served to increase the number of those who could bear witness to the resurrection, for when the soldiers were smitten by the angel as dead men, and the Savior was gone, it was sufficient proof that the supernatural power had done its work, and man's watch was in vain. Note these soldiers, although bribed to give false testimony, nevertheless served as true witnesses that something more than sleeping that night had happened to them.

FOR COMMENT: Why was a complete burial service not performed that afternoon for the body of Jesus? What prompted the chief priests and the Pharisees to have the tomb guarded by Roman soldiers?

II. THE RESURRECTION AND THE FIRST LORD'S DAY

(Matt. 28: 1-10)

Saturday, the 16th of Nisan (April 7th), from the preceding sunset, was the Sabbath day (Easter Eve). The day fol-

lowing, Sunday, the 17th of Nisan (April 8th) was the first Lord's Day (Easter Day). St. Matthew announced the Lord's resurrection, saying, **Behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it, verse 2.** The Roman soldiers on guard trembled and became as dead men. Mark's Gospel states that the women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, with sweet spices, came **very early in the morning the first day of the week** at the rising of the sun to the sepulchre to anoint the Savior's body. When they had reached the sepulchre, they found that the stone had been rolled away. Upon entering they saw that the body of Jesus was gone. Mary Magdalene was prompted at once to run and take the news to Peter and John who came running to the tomb. There appeared the vision of an angel to the women in the sepulchre, sitting on the right side, and in the form of a young man in a long white robe. Concerning this point, Luke says, "Two men stood by them in shining garments" (Ch. 24: 4). The angel informed the women that Christ had risen from the grave, and would meet his disciples in Galilee. With joy in their hearts they hastened to carry the good news to the disciples. Jesus first appeared to the women on their return from the sepulchre, and when Mary Magdalene with others saw him she went and told the disciples, but they believed not that he had risen from the dead, receiving the news "as an idle tale." It was sudden news to them, and some could not believe it. Note, the women were ready to believe him when he said, "All Hail," meaning be joyful, and they fell at his feet to worship the blessed Son of God risen from the dead. They saw and believed. More women today are ready to believe in the resurrection story of the Christ, as it was divinely carried out by the divine purpose of God, than is the case with a very great

many men. The evidence was sufficient for them that Sunday morning that Christ had become the risen Lord.

To deny the resurrection of Christ, just as it occurred, is to deny the power of the supreme God over his creation; to deny the resurrection is to disbelieve the words of the prophets concerning him; to deny his resurrection is to make Christ a false prophet himself; and to deny the resurrection is to mark all of the apostles after Pentecost as teachers and preachers of false dreams and fantasies. The very character of the Lord Jesus, the inspired word of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit within every true child of God, and the story of the early Christian church—all unitedly bear conclusive testimony to the reasonable mind that Christ is risen from the dead as God's holy Word teaches. The mystery and sacredness of it as ordained by the heavenly Father, should draw men and women in a sacred nearness to God. The proof of the fact is: The tomb was empty; the angel himself said that the Lord was risen; he appeared to the women on the way; he walked with two men that Sunday afternoon going to Emmaus; and he appeared to the disciples and others on other occasions. Even doubting Thomas was asked by the risen Lord, in the room

where the disciples were assembled, to place his fingers in the nail prints in his hands, and to put his hand in the side where the spear had pierced him. If the disciples had stolen away the body of the Christ, as the Jews feared that they would do, they could not have given to him life, for such power belonged to only the triune God. No reasonable person would, for a moment, doubt that Jesus died on the cross, when the Roman soldiers, Joseph of Arimathaea, Nicodemus and the women were witnesses that he was dead, and that they buried him in the new rock-hewn tomb belonging to Joseph. No contrary arguments can ever prove that Christ was not the risen Lord as the Scriptures have recorded through the divine knowledge of the Gospel writers.

FOR COMMENT: What are the proofs that Christ rose from the grave just as he had stated that he would do? Why is our Sunday called the Lord's Day? What is the significant part that the women played in the resurrection scene? Why did some of the disciples doubt the women's words?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: How Belief in Christ Changes Things—Acts 9: 1-30; 16: 13-34; 20: 1-38.

LESSON XIII.

MARCH 31, 1940

The Continuing Task

(Matthew 28: 16-20)

Golden Text: Ye shall be witnesses unto me, . . . and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1: 8b.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MATTHEW 28: 16-20

(*Authorized Version*)

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they wor-

shipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: This event occurred during the forty days of our Lord's frequent manifestations after his resurrection, and before his ascension. It was sometime in April or May, A. D. 30.

Place: On some mountain in Galilee, but we cannot be exact as to which one.

Persons: The risen Lord, the eleven disciples, and the multitude.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mark 16: 15-18.

T.—Luke 24: 46, 47.

W.—Dan. 7: 13, 14.

Th.—John 3: 35.

F.—Acts 2: 36; Col. 1: 16, 20.

S.—1 Cor. 15: 6, 27; Eph. 1: 21.

Su.—Heb. 1: 2; Rev. 17: 14; Philip.
2: 9-11.

THE INTRODUCTION

Christ gave the teachings of this lesson on a mountain in Galilee. His disciples and a multitude gathered about him there to hear his discourse. In this meeting on the mountain he gave to his disciples his Great Commission to go, and spread the Gospel to all the world. He promised also to be with them in the great work which he had just commissioned them to do. They were to be the gospel messengers to those who needed to know the word of God.

I. THE PLACE WHERE JESUS GAVE THE GREAT COMMISSION (Matt. 28: 16)

This appearance of Christ on the mountain was promised and appointed again and again before his death, and after his resurrection. Matthew says, **Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. They had seen the risen**

Lord more than once in Jerusalem, but, because he had appointed them to do so, they went into Galilee to the mountain to see him. As to what mountain the Lord Jesus met the eleven disciples is not known, nevertheless, the disciples had learned to obey his commands. It is probable that it was the same mountain on which he was transfigured before Peter, James and John. Surely, Christ had a purpose in meeting his disciples in the mountain. Remember, those who desire communion with Christ must attend him where he may be found. This was to be a solemn assembly with his beloved followers. It is good for those who call upon the Lord to go meet him in quiet, sacred places, and commune with him in deep earnestness. Note, where Jesus directs his followers, he will be there in their midst to bless them. He never fails to keep his promises to his children, and they can always trust him to direct their foot steps in the paths of righteousness. The great question is: Can he depend on them to be obedient at all times to his holy will? If all Christians were more obedient to the will of the heavenly Father, Christ's Church would exercise a greater influence over the world.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What should be the attitude of a follower of Christ when a call to Christian service has been given?

II. TWO ATTITUDES TOWARD THE RISEN LORD (Matt. 28: 17)

There are two attitudes, or frames of mind, to be noted in this topic. Matthew Henry says of this mountain scene, "Now was the time when he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once" (I Cor. 15: 6).—Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. V. St. Matthew says, **When they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted,** verse 17. It was evident that his appearance commanded the attitude of worship on the part of some, while others doubted. The attitude of worship possessed some, as Christ appeared to them as the Son of God, while others doubting, failed to sense the spiritual presence of the holy One. This is evidence of unbelief in some of those present on the mountain that day, just as today there are doubters of the saving power of Christ. It is a serious frame of mind when truth manifested so plainly, as the blessed word of God is for all people, is questioned and doubted in this present age. One notable Bible scholar has said, "Even among those that worship there are some that doubt." But the faith of the eleven, together with some others, increased, we believe, from that meeting on the mountain as they sought to carry the Gospel truths in their hearts. Skeptics of the Christian religion today are doubters of the divinity of Christ, and of his power to save from sin. The attitude of mind that doubts the divinely inspired Word, and God's purpose in creating man with a soul is denying by the very act the existence of a blissful life after death for the righteous souls. Believing the truth as it is in Christ Jesus makes loyal disciples of the cause of righteousness. Note, **Although some doubted,** Jesus did not utter a word of rebuke, nor did he reject them; for it is written "he will not break the bruised reed."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: In the light of Christianity what is the danger of doubt in the minds of people? How may doubt be overcome when unbelief exists in the heart?

III. CHRIST CLAIMS HIS AUTHORITY (Matt. 28: 18)

Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.** The eleven disciples stood together, may we imagine, on the mountain, with groups of believers appearing from different directions, as the risen Lord came unto them. Christ directed these words, may we believe, to the eleven disciples especially, for the following two verses which express the Great Commission were directed to them in particular. He had stated before that his authority came from God, and he declares here his universal dominion as Mediator and the founder of the Christian Church. God had sent him into the world to redeem the lost souls of men. Note, this was great power placed upon him by the heavenly Father. As Mediator, and as God in flesh, all power was given him. This power was given him that he might "give eternal life to as many as were given him" (John 17: 2). Now that he is going to receive for himself a kingdom (Luke 19: 12), he will soon sit down at the right hand of God the Father. Remember that this power given him was in heaven and in earth. He is the sole Monarch, King of kings and Lord of lords. Even the angels are subject to him (Eph. 1: 21, 23). He spoke as one having authority, and not as the scribes and Pharisees. To him every heart and knee must bow, and every tongue confess his divinity. People should respect at all times political and civil authority, which seek to give them peace and justice, and at the same time the pursuit of happiness, but it is more important and praiseworthy, here

and hereafter, to accept and abide by religious authority coming from God's only begotten Son. Christ manifested his supernatural power during the three and half years of his earthly ministry by casting out demons, healing the diseased, raising the dead, performing miracles, and speaking peace and contentment to the hearts of sinful men. He made no claim to any authority that he did not possess.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Christ first assure the disciples of his authority on the mountain before he gave them his Great Commission? What authority and power should people respect and obey?

IV. THE GREAT COMMISSION GIVEN TO THE DISCIPLES (Matt. 28: 19, 20a)

After declaring his power and authority, Christ said to his disciples, **Go ye therefore.** The word "therefore" has immediate reference here to what he had been saying concerning his authority. Since I have just given you the assurance of my authority in heaven and on earth, I now commission you to **Go, . . . teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.** They were to be his ministers in carrying his Gospel to lost souls. The right to exercise this authority unto all kindreds and tongues was given to them direct from God's only Son. Men in the army are commissioned by superior officers to perform certain duties. Here the greatest authority on earth to perform the greatest task on earth was given by the greatest person that ever lived. No king or emperor ever had so great authority, or gave so great commission to his overlords for the welfare of his subjects, as Christ possessed over all the earth.

Note, these disciples were given the commission to make disciples of all na-

tions; that is, disperse themselves in such a way as they would best diffuse the Gospel. This meant that all peoples were included in Christ's saving grace, and that the disciples were to carry the good news wherever they went. Thus, this expression, "teaching all nations," broke down the middle wall of partition, which had for centuries excluded the Gentiles (those who were not Jews) from a visible church, by the disciples being now commissioned to go to all nations. Their work was to make disciples of the Christian faith, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free. The gospel is for all who will believe on the Son of God as the Redeemer of mankind—nothing greater in all the world was ever placed on the shoulders of men.

Now, how were they to admit disciples into Christ's church? The sacred rite of baptism was enjoined by Christ on his gospel messengers upon the reception of believers into his church. He said, **Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.** Note, this baptism must be administered in the name of the Triune God; that is to say, by authority from heaven, and not of man. In this way his ministers act by authority coming from the three persons of the Godhead. Thus honor and sacredness is placed upon the ordinance of baptism. Remember, those administering baptism are to call upon the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, performing the sacred ordinance in the name of the Most High God. Note, again, that the disciples were to teach **them** (the newly made disciples of Christ) **to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.** Teaching is a great part of the gospel. Know the truth and the truth shall make you free indeed. The new believers in Christ were to be taught the observance of those things which Christ had commanded his disciples to do. How do the older members of the church today

teach the new converts who come into the church? Herein lies a great neglect on the part of the ministry and the leaders of the churches of many of the Protestant denominations. The church seems to be satisfied when these confess and are baptized, and their names are entered on the church register. Teaching the observance of the principles of Christianity, as Christ would have it done, is important for every local church organization.

People have been slow to realize the full value of religious education. In fact the work of teaching Christianity belongs in the home, in the church through the Sunday School, the preached word, young people's work, mission classes, and the like. Good religious books are an essential part of every home for the teaching of religious truths. The home is the

first institution in which the beginning of religious instruction should be given to the growing children. Dr. B. F. Westcott has said, "No addition can be made to God's love; no addition can be made to Christ's words. But we on our side can respond to the love more warmly; we can enter into the words more deeply and this we must do, if we are not to stand still while all around is moving. For to stand is to die."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is necessary for a disciple of Christ to do to fulfill perfectly the Great Commission? Why are church people so lax in carrying the gospel, and in teaching the Word of God?

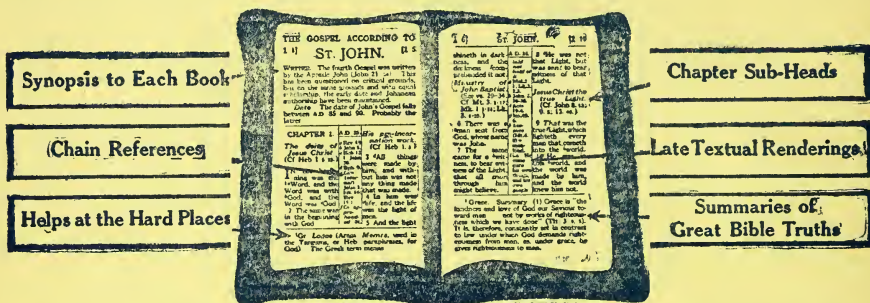
FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Presence of Jesus—Matt. 28: 20; Acts 18: 10; Jer. 1: 18, 19.

Helps On the Pages Where Needed

The Scofield Reference Bible

Edited by REV. C. I. SCOFIELD, D.D.

Compare your Bibles with it. See if any of them have these helpful features: Chain-references of great Bible doctrines—Summaries of great Bible truths—Synopsis to each book of the Bible—Prophecies harmonized—Apparent contradictions reconciled—Revised marginal references—Bible types explained—The greater covenants analyzed.



HANDY SIZE EDITION

Specimen of Type

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

Size 7x4½ inches and only 1¾ inches in thickness.

LARGE TYPE EDITION

Specimen of Type

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

Size 8½x5½ inches and only 1¾ inches in thickness.

NOTE—All have overlapping covers, round corners, and red under gold edges, except as noted.

No. 40. Fine Grain Cloth, round corners, red edges. **-----\$1.95**

No. 53. French Morocco Leather. **-----\$5.50**

"Oxford India Paper" Edition

Fits the Pocket

Size 7x4½ inches and only 1 inch thick.

No. 53x. French Morocco Leather. **-----\$7.00**

No. 55x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed. **-----\$8.00**

No. 59x. Persian Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed. **-----\$9.00**

With Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names, Subject, Index, Concordance and Maps. (1½ inches thick.)

No. 153. French Morocco Leather, (white paper edition, 1½ inches thick) **-----\$6.50**

No. 155x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed. **-----\$9.50**

No. 165x. Real Morocco Leather, calf lined to edge, silk sewed. **-----\$12.00**

No. 90. Fine Grain Cloth, round corners, red edges. **-----\$2.75**

No. 73. French Morocco Leather. **-----\$6.50**

"Oxford India Paper" Edition

Size 8½x5½ inches and only 1 inch thick.

No. 73x. French Morocco Leather. **-----\$9.00**

No. 75x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed. **-----\$10.00**

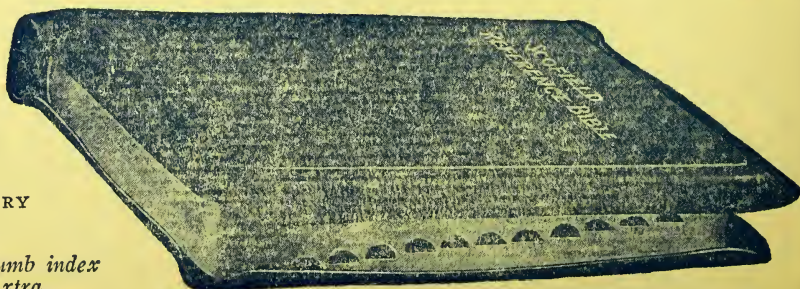
No. 79x. Persian Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed. **-----\$11.50**

With Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names, Subject, Index, Concordance and Maps. (1½ inches thick.)

No. 173. French Morocco Leather, (white paper edition, 1½ inches thick) **-----\$7.50**

No. 175x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed. **-----\$11.50**

No. 185x. Real Morocco Leather, calf lined to edge, silk sewed. **-----\$14.75**



A
BIBLE
AND A
COMMENTARY
COMBINED

*Improved thumb index
at 50c extra.*

The Advanced Quarterly



For Use By

ADULT

and

YOUNG

PEOPLE'S

Classes



PUBLISHED BY
Free Will Baptist Press
AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

THE ADVANCED QUARTERLY

for

Young People and Adults

REV. R. B. SPENCER ----- *Editor*

Volume I Second Quarter, 1940 Number 2
April-May-June

CONTENTS

	Page
1. April 7: Amos Pleads for Justice -----	3
2. April 14: Hosea Tells of God's Forgiving Love -----	7
3. April 21: Micah's Vision of Peace -----	12
4. April 28: Isaiah Comforts an Afflicted People -----	16
5. May 5: Isaiah Gives God's Invitation -----	21
6. May 12: Habakkuk Fights Through Doubt to Faith -----	26
7. May 19: Jeremiah Denounces False Prophets -----	30
8. May 26: Jeremiah Announces the New Covenant -----	35
9. June 2: Testing Conduct by Its Usefulness -----	40
10. June 9: Ezekiel Teaches Personal Responsibility -----	44
11. June 16: Haggai Urges the Building of God's House -----	49
12. June 23: Malachi Demands Honesty toward God -----	54
13. June 30: Jonah: The Outreach of God's Love -----	58

Published Quarterly by the Free Will Baptist Press, Ayden, North Carolina.
Price 8 cents per copy ----- 32 cents per year

Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office, Ayden, North Carolina,
under the Act of March 3, 1879.

FOREWORD

The Educational Commission, upon selecting the subjects for the lessons of this quarter, stated its aim thus: "To study messages from the prophets in order to discover their meaning and value for our time."

For this purpose, therefore, the commission chose these lessons from the prophecies uttered within the period, from 765 to 425 B. C. During this period of the history of the Jews, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah grew weaker and weaker under the power of sin, and finally fell into the hands of the strong, enemy nations about them. God's judgments against them for their transgressions are definitely set forth in these lessons for our study.

These lessons are taken from the works of both the Major and the Minor prophets to teach the meaning and value of their messages for our own day. The first three are selected from Amos, Hosea and Micah; fourth and fifth from Isaiah; the next five from Habakkuk, Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and the last three from Haggai, Malachi and Jonah. Amos and Hosea were prophets of Israel, while Habakkuk, Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah were prophets of Judah. Ezekiel prophesied to the Exiles in Babylon, and Haggai and Malachi are the Post-Exilic prophets in Jerusalem.

The writer of these lessons has tried to set forth the scriptural teachings in plain terms. It has been his aim to explain, or make plain, the meaning of the main points of God's word in the printed lesson-text in each lesson. Parallel scripture references and quotations are frequently given to enable the student to more fully understand the teachings under each topic. As supplementary materials, the writer has used *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, *Dr. James R. Kaye's The Teacher's Guide*, *Peloubet's Select Notes*, and other standard works on the Bible in the preparation of each lesson.

R. B. SPENCER

Amos Pleads for Justice

(Amos 5 and 7)

Golden Text: Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment (justice) in the gate. Amos 5:15.

THE PRINTED TEXT: AMOS 5: 1, 10-15, 21-24

(Authorized Version)

1 Hear ye this word which I take up against you, even a lamentation, O house of Israel.

10 They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

11 Forasmuch, therefore, as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

12 For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.

13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye

may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

21 I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

22 Though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.

23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: About 760 B. C.

Place: Amos spoke his prophecies at Bethel which is about twelve miles north of Jerusalem. His prophecies were addressed primarily to Israel, the northern kingdom.

Persons: Amos, Amaziah the priest, and the people of Israel.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—I Kings 22: 8; Isaiah 29:21.

T.—Micah 6:15; Zephaniah 1: 13; Hag-gai 1: 6.

W.—Isaiah 48: 1, 2; Micah 3:11.

Th.—Isaiah 66: 3; Jeremiah 14: 12.

F.—Leviticus 7: 11-15; Micah 6: 6, 7.

S.—I Kings 12:31, 32; Jeremiah 26:8-11.

S.—Deuteronomy 32: 2; Ezekiel 20: 46.

THE INTRODUCTION

Amos, who was a shepherd and dresser of sycamore trees, lived at Tekoa, a town in Judah located about six miles south of Jerusalem. Although he was not trained in the regular prophetic schools of his day, he was called by God to the prophetic office to deliver the Heavenly Father's messages. God called him, probably about 765 B. C., to go to Israel, the northern kingdom, to tell the people what they

must do to escape the judgment that was about to be sent upon them for their transgressions. At the time of this prophecy, Jeroboam II was ruler of Israel, and Uzziah ruled Judah. Amos met with opposition in Israel, chiefly from Amaziah, the high priest at Bethel, but he did not falter under Amaziah's dissuasions, nor did he allow himself to be turned aside by the authorities of the kingdom from the task which God had given him to perform. The Spiritual life of Israel was at a low ebb, and idolatry was the chief worship among the people at the time Amos went to give them God's warning.

I. GOD'S CALL TO ISRAEL (Amos 5: 1-15)

In obedience to God's command, Amos went to speak his prophetic words to the people of Israel. Though coming from a simple station in life, as Moses, Elisha, and the Lord's disciples had done, Amos entered boldly upon the work which God had assigned for him to do. He cried out to the people, saying, **Hear ye this word which I take up against you, even a lamentation.** The kingdom of Israel was in a calamitous condition. The people as a whole had forgotten God, they had turned to idolatrous worship, they had become licentious in their ways of living, and they had oppressed the poor in the gate. Injustice in the courts had been practiced against those who were unable to defend their rights. **The virgin of Israel had fallen,** verse 2. Israel had lost her charm, her beautiful and gay state of affairs had become corrupted, and she had fallen into contempt, and thus she had lost her former dignity and power. Her princes had become disabled; those who were her allies abroad had failed her; and she had become forsaken in her own land. **There is none to raise her up.** Her people were diminished by war; for example, cities sending out one thousand strong and brave men had lost all but one hundred; and those sending out one hundred to

battle had returning only ten. But note the cause of this trouble, Israel had brought these calamities upon herself because she had turned from God and had broken his commandments.

But God sent Amos to warn the people of the impending judgment, and to urge them to seek the Lord. **Seek ye me and ye shall live.** By seeking the Lord they would obtain life; that is, abundance of life here. There would come to them joy and happiness in living this life by seeking God, and then by living correct lives before the world. Amos spoke God's word definitely to them concerning their transgressions. He said, **I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins.** What were their great sins? Note, they may be listed in the following way: (1) Worshipping idols and corrupting the worship of God; (2) the practice of injustice among themselves, making the administrations of justice bitter and nauseous; (3) the oppression of the poor to make them more poor, taking from them what was needed for their families; and (4) the malicious persecutions of God's faithful ministers, for they hated to be chastised by them for their evil deeds. They could not bear to be reproved. **They hate him that rebuketh in the gate,** in the gate of the house of God, or in the courts of justice. They had become a profligate people, respecting neither God nor man. Even the prudent men, the good men of the kingdom, were afraid to open their mouths and rebuke those high in authority. God knew their deeds were evil. Amos told them not to seek Bethel, for it with its golden calf, would come to naught. Said he, the enemy will come and despoil it. Likewise they were warned not to enter into Gilgal, the stronghold of idolatry at that time, for the enemy would come and carry the people into captivity. Amos warned them that all the kingdom of Israel was in danger of God's judgment lest they repent. He exhorted them to **Seek the Lord, . . . lest he**

break out like fire in the house of Joseph. He declared that, although they had built houses of hewn stone, and had planted pleasant vineyards, they should not be privileged to enjoy them. Again, Amos warned the people in positive terms of God's impending wrath and plead with them to seek God before it would be too late.

How strange is it that people will wander from God's love and care! Yet, think how God loves them! Even today men forget God and his goodness. They go after the things of the world. They commit sin and wrongfully treat those with whom they deal to obtain their heart's desire. The principles of right and justice, peace and friendship do not hold them in check when they are set on carrying their points.

Remember, they were exhorted to seek good, not evil, and the Lord would be with them. Their only hope of safety lay in their turning to God and doing good. Note what Professor McFadyen has had to say on this point:

"In Amos goodness is the doing of justice in society, the securing of fair play between man and man. The man who would even try to live to himself could not be good in the Old Testament sense of the term, however many of the passive virtues he might possess. The good man is not merely the man who practices prayer, who avoids intemperance and immorality: he is the man who considers the poor, who does what he can bring in the reign of justice."—In *Peloubet's Select Notes*.

To seek God, therefore, is to seek the good, for ultimately this is seeking God. Our professions of seeking God are false if we are not seeking, above everything else, the things that are lovely and of good report. By first seeking and finding God, we will then do the good things and hate the evil which sinful men are doing.

It is through this way of living the good life that people can become truly happy.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: What were Israel's "mighty sins"? Why did she hate to be reproved of her sins? What was the only way out of their situation?

II. GOD CONDEMNED ISRAEL'S FALSE WORSHIP (Amos 5: 21-26)

In verses twenty-one through twenty-four, Amos denounced in definite terms the people for their false worship to Almighty God. He said that God detested their outward show of devotion to him. He hated and despised their feast-days which they observed at Bethel in imitation of those celebrated at Jerusalem. They had outwardly made pretenses of sacred worship by offering the **burnt-offering** to the honor of God, the **meat-offering** in obedience to the law, and the **peace-offering** to implore the favor of God. As a part of the feast-day they used songs just as were observed at Jerusalem. But God saw the iniquity of their hearts, and the mock which they were making of the use of his sacrifices. Accordingly he cried out, saying, **Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.** All these things were an abomination in his sight. What he was condemning was their hypocrisy, and not the sacrifices which had been divinely instituted by God himself centuries before. The performance of such religious observance before him was an offence to his great name. Such sacrifices, whenever offered as an outward show, never can atone for sins committed against God. May we note, their sacrifices to him were not of "a sweet smelling savour." In the eyes of the Lord, for one to love righteousness and to do good to his neighbor is far better than "all burnt-offerings and sacrifices."

Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream, verse

24. That is to say, Let there come a change in your manner of living and sacrificing! Consider your ways, and turn to justice and righteousness! Supplant all the evil in your land with true worship to God and good deeds to your fellow-man! Let justice reign supreme, and your loyalty to the eternal God be your standard of righteousness! Wherefore, make reformation, and when made perfect, it shall be counted unto you greater than your show of burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

Again Amos condemned them in these strong words: But you have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch, verse 26. Matthew Henry tells us that they had little shrines, "Little shrines that you made to carry about with you, pocket-idols for your private superstition. Chirn or Remphan, it is supposed, represented Saturn the highest of the seven planets." — **Matthew Henry's Commentary, Volume IV.** The worship of the heavenly bodies, as the sun, moon, and stars, was the most ancient form of idolatry. Israel had fallen into this form of worship, and thus had brought God's judgment upon her. Because of this grievous sin against God, Amos told them that they would be sent into captivity beyond Damascus. Since they were led captive by Satan into idolatry, God, therefore, caused them to go at the hands of the Assyrians far beyond Damascus. Read II Kings, chapter 7. The thing that God wants of everyone is the inner, true, undivided love, and adoration of the human heart. True worship today, wherever the banner of Christ is set up, is what God wants his followers to observe. Hearts not consecrated to the Lord, as in the case of the people of Israel, are not fit to participate in the Lord's sacraments. For example, those who partake today of the Lord's Table unworthily are condemned by the heavenly Father, as were those of Israel for their outward show of making offerings to God, (I Corinthians 11: 29).

FOR CLASS COMMENT: Ask a member of the class to discuss briefly God's condemnations against Israel. What was Israel required to do to get right with God?

III. AMAZIAH THE PRIEST OPPOSED AMOS (Amos 7: 10-17)

Amaziah the priest of Bethel, and the chief of the priests who administered to the golden calf there, challenged Amos, and commanded him to Go, flee away into the land of Judah. He had become bitter against Amos for prophesying against his altars of idolatrous worship. Furthermore, he maliciously informed king Jeroboam II that Amos was conspiring against him, saying that you shall die by the sword, and that Israel will be led into captivity. He considered this act of prophecy no less than an act of treason against the king, and that Amos was sowing seeds of sedition, and seeking to disrupt the kingdom with his bitter words against Israel. Hence he exclaimed, Go, prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and the king's court. Note here the malice which Amaziah had for Amos, and how he was trying to arouse the king against him. It was not true that Amos had said, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, nor did he die in that manner. Read II Kings 14: 28. Amaziah hated for the truth to be told concerning the corrupt practices of worship at Bethel, and consequently he sought by unjust means to force Amos out of the kingdom. Though he admitted him to be a seer, he commands Amos to go and prophesy in the land of Judah. It was the truth that hurt, and men in authority do not want to be told of their sins. On the other hand, he did not tell the king how Amos had interceded for Israel; how he had turned away first one judgment and then another; and how he had made intercessions to God for them. Nor had he told him that the pronouncements were condition-

al, how Amos had assured Israel that she would not have these judgments visited upon her if she would repent and turn to the Lord. This he should have done in fairness to king Jeroboam. But we do not find that Jeroboam took any notice of this information which Amaziah so bitterly brought against Amos.

Note now Amos' reply and stand which he took before Amaziah. He said, **The Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.** Amos told Amaziah that he was an herdsman, but God had called him to speak to Israel. Accordingly, he went, not to be turned aside from his purpose, but to make full proof of his ministry. God had made him a prophet, and he would not be persuaded by a false priest to forsake the commission which was given him. He would not run from his opponent, the disciple of the Devil, but instead remain, and perform the duty which he was entrusted to do. He had obeyed God in going to Israel, and he was ready to meet the challenge.

Thus, Amos gave to Israel the message which God wanted to be delivered unto her people.

More preachers like Amos are needed today to stand by the truth wherever the Gospel is preached. Men, who will declare the whole counsel of God, regardless as to the type or source of opposition, are indispensable to call the people to sane reasoning and righteous living. Fearless and God called ministers, those who will not yield to unchristian principles of thought and teaching, but instead will preach the Word in all of its purity and meaning, are the spokesmen whom God will honor and bless.

FOR CLASS COMMENT: Have a student tell why and how Amaziah opposed Amos. What qualities did Amos show as a prophet of God? What qualities should ministers of today possess?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Three Parables of Judgment against Israel—Amos 7: 1-9; II Kings 15: 19-21; II Kings 16 and 17.

LESSON II

APRIL 14, 1940

Hosea Tells of God's Forgiving Love (Hosea 6, 11, 14)

Golden Text: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I John 1:9.

THE PRINTED TEXT: HOSEA 6: 1-7; 14:4-9
(Authorized Version)

1 Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

5 Therefore I have hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.

7 But they, like men, have transgress-

ed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

* * *

4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.

7 They that dwell under his shadow

shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent therefore shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

8 Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir-tree. From me is thy fruit found.

9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Hosea uttered his prophetic teachings to Israel between 745 B. C. to the end of the eighth century.

Place: In northern Israel.

Persons: Hosea and the people of Israel.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—I Sam. 2: 6; Jer. 30: 17.

T.—II Sam. 23:4; Ps. 72:6; Isa. 54:13.

W.—Jer. 1: 10; 23: 39; Heb. 4: 12.

T.—Micah 6:8; Matt. 9:13; John 17:3.

F.—Deut. 17:16; Isa. 30:2; Jer. 31:18.

S.—Job 29:19; Prov. 19:12.

S.—Gen. 27:27; Ps. 52:8.

THE INTRODUCTION

Hosea belonged to the northern kingdom and his labors extended over a period of several years. During the period there were on the throne of Israel seven kings; namely, Jeroboam, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea. Hosea, like Amos, spoke courageously God's word to Israel, declaring God's wrath would be visited upon her unless she repent. It is well to note that Hosea spoke in a metaphorical and figurative language, using variety of thought and emotional coloring which are characteristic of his style. He is called "the weeping prophet" of Israel as Jeremiah was of Judah. His entreaties to Israel are as tearful as his denunciations are fearful, and it is in this part of his prophecy that this lesson falls.

I. HOSEA PLEADS WITH ISRAEL TO RETURN TO GOD (Hosea 6: 1-3)

As we begin this study, let us note the prophet's earnest plea to Israel in these words: **Come, and let us return unto the Lord.** Here the yearning heart of Hosea is expressed in tender pleadings with wayward, rebellious Israel to return unto God. Israel had been, for many years, living under an unbroken period of spiritual declension, and was steeped in idolatry. Although the false prophets of Baal had been destroyed years before by king Jehu, Israel had returned to the idolatry of Jeroboam I, and had persisted in the false worship (II Kings 10:18-29). It is the duty of all who have forsaken God to repent and return to him. The student is to note here Israel's transgression against God, and the urgent call of the prophet to her to repentance. Israel was standing in need of God.

In the next place, the prophet reminds the people that **he hath torn, . . . he hath smitten them.** God had suffered the enemy nations to come upon them, and to visit upon them hardships and devastations. Matthew Henry has the following to say in this connection: "It

is for our revolts from him that he has torn and smitten us in anger, and we cannot expect that he shall be reconciled to us till we return to him. . . . The judgments of God upon us and our land, especially when they are tearing judgments, should awaken us to return to God by repentance, and prayer, and reformation." But God, declared the prophet, **will heal us, . . . he will bind us up**, verse 1. Thus, Hosea assures the people that God will heal them if they will return to him. Note the condition: they are to seek God first. **After two days he will revive us**; that is, in a very short time, in a day or two. God does not require an extended time to bless a sinful people who will speedily return to him. "He that hath torn will heal, he that has smitten will bind us up." Hosea here emphasizes the fact that God will bless Israel if she will return to him. They had gone off into sin and they must come back to God.

In the third day he will raise us up. "One should note here that the idea of resurrection is definitely connected with 'the third day'."—*Peloubet's Select Notes*. "This seems to have a further reference to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the time limit is expressed by two days and the third day, that it may be a type and figure of Christ's rising the third day."—*Matthew Henry*. By returning to God and living true to his Word, the people were assured to be raised up, and to live in his sight.

If we follow on to know the Lord; that is to say, if we do the prescribed duty, we have reason to expect the promised reward. It is a fact, God will give his penitent people more of his knowledge; that is, knowledge shall be increased, for when a people turn to God, he gives them "the heart to know him" (Jeremiah 24:7). Remember, God will return his favors which he had withheld whenever people will seek him with penitent hearts. **He shall come unto us as the rains.** Just as

God sends the rains to water the dry earth, just so he will draw near unto his people to bless them. As the refreshing showers nourish the growing grain and cause them to be fruitful, just so God forgives his penitent children, and showers upon them his manifold blessings. God's prophet plead for sinful Israel, and assured her that God would come unto her people if they would heed the call. Note, first, they were to confess their sins, and second, they were to seek humbly God's favor. Then, showers of blessings, like the rains from heaven, would be given unto them. But note what happened: "As the Biblical records inform us, these pleas of the prophet were spurned, and within his own generation rebellious Israel fell before the Assyrian host."—*Peloubet's Select Notes*. How strange it is, the gods of mammon allure people away from the true and the living God!

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What were Israel's sins at the time of Hosea's prophecy? What promises did God make through his prophet to Israel? How may these truths apply today to us?

II. GOD'S ARRAIGNMENT AGAINST ISRAEL (Hosea 6: 4-7)

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? The student is to note that Ephraim, as used here, is Hosea's familiar name for the kingdom of Israel. God raised the question, not to show that he did not know what to do with Israel, but to call her attention to her "evanescent goodness." Through the lips of the prophet, God is speaking here of Israel's unsteady, unstable and unreliable goodness. Her goodness or kindness was, as the morning cloud, soon gone. The people soon retracted that kindness to themselves; that is, undid it, and wronged their own souls as much as before. What goodness they had manifested had disappeared. All the goodness that had appeared in their lives had vanished as the morning

cloud and the early dew. The student is to note that such was the goodness in king Jehu's time (884-856 B. C.), and in Hezekiah's and Josiah's time while they were kings of Judah. Hypocrites are here compared to clouds without water (Jude 1: 12). Was God to accept their goodness? No, for it was not lasting. Passing goodness is not pleasing to God, nor is it profitable to man. When men begin well in Christian works, but do not hold out long, then their goodness is as the morning cloud and the early dew, soon vanished. "Unless the aspiration and intention have produced abiding results, a harvest of fruitfulness, of realization, there is no value in such experience."—Peloubet's Select Notes.

Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets. Because of their unstable ways, and undependable goodness, God had hewn them by the prophets; that is, he had slain them by the words of his mouth. The prophets had fully condemned them by the word of God, had hewed them by the convictions of sin. God, by his ministers, hews sinners whose hearts are as but rough stones, and require the cutting words of rebuke to bring them to the full realization of God's power. "I have slain them by my judgments, according to the words of my mouth." They had not been faithful to God's covenant. I desired mercy (goodness) and not sacrifices. Israel's sacrifices, mere show of religion, were an offense to God. Her people had transgressed his covenant. He had insisted upon the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings. It is one thing for a people to pretend to be religious, and quite another thing to be true worshippers of God. Israel had played false unto God, there have they dealt treacherously against me, verse 7. James says, "A doubleminded man is unstable in all his ways."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How do

instability and unfaithfulness in the lives of individuals affect the world today?

III. A PROPHECY OF IMPENDING JUDGMENT UPON ISRAEL

(Hosea 11: 5-7)

Verses five and six here depict a terrible judgment which was to come upon Israel. Hosea warned them of the stern disciplinary measures which God would impose upon Israel for her backsliding. He had both Assyria and Egypt in mind as nations to which many of Israel's people would be taken as captives, for at that time the armies of both countries were frequent invaders of Israel. Just as the prophet predicted, so the enemy came later, and carried captive many of Israel's people away with them. The mention of the sword in verse six is figurative, and represents war which the enemy eventually waged against Israel. Such impending judgment of approaching war, of the devastation of their cities, and of their fortifications together with the loss of lives and those taken into captivity, was the just condemnation which they had brought upon themselves for their transgressions against God. Their idolatrous worship, their pretense of holy worship to Almighty God through offerings of sacrifices, and their transitory goodness were all acts of mockery to the Lord, and he, therefore, suffered the judgment to come upon them in due time. Their sins had found them out, and they were to reap just punishment for their transgressions.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Israel not heed God's prophet, and avoid the judgment pronounced against them?

IV. HOSEA'S FINAL PLEA WITH ISRAEL TO RETURN

(Hosea 14: 1-9)

The prophet made his final call to Israel in the opening verses of the last chapter of his prophecy. **Thou has fallen by thine iniquity.** Their man made idols

and false worship to Baal were their chief stumbling-blocks. Note the repetition in this lesson of the prophet's condemnation against them. **Thou hast transgressed.** Their spiritual condition was a state of transgression against God's covenant, and a corrupt worship of the gods—graven images of Baal. Sin is a fall, a state of corruption which concerns all who are living in disobedience to God's Word. When anyone is living in sin, as Israel in the days of Hosea, he is to return, repenting of his sins, to the heavenly Father. Hosea urged Israel to **return unto the Lord thy God, verse 1.** There was no other way of escape from the impending judgment. The penalty was certain to fall upon them unless they repent. "It is the great concern of those who have revolted from God to return to God, and so to do their first works." —Matthew Henry. The same call comes today to unsaved souls everywhere.

Note in verse two how the prophet gave the necessary instructions as to how they should return. **Take with you words.** They were not to take sacrifices and offerings, for God was offended at their pretense of worship; but return with penitential prayers and supplications, the fruits of their lips. They were to be words spoken first from the inner man; that is to say, from their hearts, full of repentance, must dictate to their tongues the right words. By taking the words of repentance and contrition in their hearts, the people of Israel were to return to the Lord. This turning must be, first, inwardly in their hearts, and then expressed outwardly in their lives of service to Almighty God. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he; and God judges man from the secrets of his heart, not from outward show of religion. Fallen humanity is to seek the throne of grace, and ask God to remove their sins.

Asshur shall not save us. This, it is thought, is a reference to the kingdom of Assyria. The people of Israel were no

longer to seek the help of Assyria, nor to trust in alliances abroad in times of trouble, as they had previously done, see chapter 5: 13. They were to turn to God, and not to depend upon the Assyrians and others for help. **Neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, ye are our gods.** They were urged by the prophet never to worship idols again. The man made gods were the works of their hands, and they were to disclaim the idols which they had been worshipping, and to take God as their supreme guide. If they were to find help in God, they must turn to him and obey his commandments. His promised blessings to Israel were conditional; that is, the prophet told them that if they would return unto the Lord they would live. God had promised to heal their backsliding, and to love them freely if they would repent. He will do the same today for all who will seek his lovingkindness and tender mercies, for he is no respecter of persons.

Note again, the prophet told Israel that God would be as the dew unto them. As dew collects at night upon growing plants, and invigorates and refreshes them with moisture, so God, with tender mercies and lovingkindness, will bless backslidden Israel when she returns to him. He will refresh them with his love that their souls may be watered as the dew of heaven waters the thirsty plants. Then Israel shall grow, in grace and in knowledge of the Lord, as the lily. They shall be as Lebanon, the forests of Lebanon, the great cedar trees of Lebanon, and shall cast forth their strength and beauty as a redeemed people. God will not fail them. **They shall revive as the corn, and blossom as the vine.** Joy will come to their hearts, and they will bear fruit, true worship to Almighty God, as the vine bears grapes. It is the beauty of holiness that is produced by the dew of the morning (Ps. 110: 3). True worship by the returned

children of God is the beauty of holiness. Spiritual growth takes root in the heart, and manifests its fruits in the service of the Master. Just so, the prophet assures Israel that her branches shall spread as the cedars of Lebanon, and her beauty shall be as the olive tree. There is grace and beauty in the lives of God's saints, for they feast upon the riches of his Word, and administer blessings to the fallen and needy.

In conclusion of this lesson, note what the prophet in the last two verses had to say. What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard (answered) him, and obeyed (will regard) him. "God promises to bring Ephraim and keep him to this: Ephraim shall say, God will put it into his heart to say it, What have I to do any more with idols?"... Ephraim had solemnly engaged not to call his idols his gods; but God here engages further for him that he shall resolve to have no more to do with them."—Matthew Henry. Thus, Ephraim was to give up his idol worship and obey God. Note in the last verse that the prophet says: Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? That is to say,

people who will read and study God's word will understand. People are to study God's word that they may know his will toward men. Sinful men and women everywhere should say today: What have we any more to do with adultery, drunkenness, profanity, jealousy, greed, and other common sins which are around us? We have heard the cry of the Lord, and we will obey and follow him.

"This is a striking picture of God's gracious dealings and Israel's spiritual attitudes. But Israel was not healed of her backsliding; she rushed impetuously to her doom. Her roots did not spread as Lebanon. She did not renounce her idols, and did not acknowledge God as right."—James R. Kaye in *The Teacher's Guide*.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why was Israel so stubborn and rebellious? Ask a member of the class to state why he believes the nations would be as greatly blessed today, as was promised Israel in this lesson, if they would meet God's conditions.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Israel's Ingratitude to God for His Benefits. Hosea 11: 1-12; Isa. 65: 7; Jer. 18: 15.

LESSON III

APRIL 21, 1940

Micah's Vision of Peace

(Micah 4:1-5; 5:2-5)

Golden Text: And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Micah 4:3.

THE PRINTED TEXT: MICAH 4: 1-5; 5: 2-5a
(Authorized Version)

1 But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for

the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

3 And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

5 For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

* * *

2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

4 And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

5 And this man shall be the peace.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: It was during the reign of Hezekiah, twelfth king of Judah, and probably between 726 and 701 B. C.

Place: Micah's ministry was performed within the territory of Judah, and largely within Jerusalem.

Persons: Micah and the people of Israel and Judah.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Eze. 17: 22, 23.

T.—Ps. 25: 8-12; Isa. 42: 1-4.

W.—Ps. 72: 7; Isa. 2: 4.

T.—Matt. 2: 6; Lu. 2: 4.

F.—Eze. 34: 13-15.

S.—Isa. 10: 20-22.

S.—Isa. 8: 7, 8; 10: 24-27.

THE INTRODUCTION

Micah, the fifth of the Minor Prophets, and contemporary with Isaiah, labored during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. His prophetic teachings fall, it is thought, between 740—700 B. C. He was a native of the little town of Moresheth which was in the western part of Judah. During his time, the moral and spiritual conditions of the people were corrupt. He in an influential way as God's prophet aided the reformation brought about under king Hezekiah. Also he witnessed the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 B. C., which was caused by the invading Assyrian men of war.

In this lesson the student is to note that God is speaking through this prophet to his wayward people, and is promising them that he will send the Messiah, his blessed Son, to speak peace to the nations.

I. THE GLORY OF THE LORD'S HOUSE IN THE LAST DAYS

(Micah 4: 1, 2)

In the beginning of this study, may we note that Micah prophesied for Israel, the northern kingdom, as well as for Judah, the southern kingdom. Hence, his prophetic words, directed by God, were given to the people of both kingdoms. Note, In the last days it shall come to pass, verse 1. In this thought Micah is referring to a time far distant from his own day. He promised that the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains; that is, in the days of the Messiah. This points to the fact that the Church of Christ will be set up in the world. This church shall be firmly founded, for Christ himself will

build it upon a rock. Micah declared that this church, the Lord's house, shall be exalted above the hills. Its exalted position, high and lifted up, is representative of a high and holy place, sending forth the gospel light to a sinful world. This Church of Christ shall be for all peoples, for the prophets declared that his Church would be established, set up at his coming, and that he would speak peace to the people.

The prophet says further that **All peoples shall flow unto it.** In Isaiah we read, "All nations shall flow unto it." When this shall take place, the following prophecy: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. 11: 9), will then be fulfilled. "It will be the time of worldwide evangelization, . . . the spiritual empire holding sway over the hearts of men of every clime."—**The Teacher's Guide by Kaye.** When this time of the gathering of all peoples to God shall be, it will denote a universal attitude to the spiritual order. Such will be an international movement toward God and righteousness. Then the nations will be anxious to be taught in his ways and walk in his paths. Think, what a time to be hoped for! How it will be such a contrast to our own day!

Many nations shall say, **Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.** The prophet tells us that they will seek his ways and walk in his paths, and he will teach them his ways. He will come to Jerusalem, the most fitting place of all, and he shall guide many people, for as Isaiah has said, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth" (Isa. 42: 4). His kingdom will be one of peace for all people, and his judgment will be just for all nations.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What proof have we today that this prophecy has not been completely fulfilled?

II. CHRIST'S RULERSHIP OVER THE NATIONS

(Micah 4: 3-5)

Christ will, in that day, be the Ruler of the peoples of the earth. Micah tells us that **he will judge, . . . and rebuke.** He will set up his government; he will judge the people; and he will rebuke strong nations. According to this statement, strong nations will be rebuked for their wickedness. The people will be judged by the way they have been living. His government shall be one of peace and righteousness.

But note the conditions today, how the strong, aggressor nations of Europe and Asia are crushing the small nations! See how they are oppressing, destroying property, killing people, and spreading suffering in the wake of war! Read how vicious and godless their hearts are set against humanity and the spirit of peace, and against the good-will of smaller nations. Remember, that day of universal peace has not yet come. On the other hand, war, death and destruction today are of chief concern with the great nations of the earth. Listen to these prophetic words of Joel the prophet: "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; . . . Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears." (Joel 3: 9, 10). This is a picture of present conditions today with the warring nations.

But let us study carefully Micah's prophetic words concerning that future time: **They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.** When that day shall come, the nations will do these things. They will convert implements of war into tools of industry. But what is happening today? Scrap iron of automobiles, tractors, worn-out factory machinery, and of discarded farm machinery are being gathered up and converted into implements of war. Tons and tons of such are being used to

kill men in Europe and Asia now. But the prophet is saying that angry, passionate men, in that day, shall be wonderfully changed, and made gentle toward all men. Read just at this point Titus 3: 2. Wherever this Gospel of the Lord Jesus shall prevail, it will make men peaceable, for such is the wisdom from above. Note, it is promised that none shall be quarrelsome, for the art of war shall be forgotten. They shall not learn of war any more. Note again, they shall be quiet; they shall sit safely, and none be disturbed. None shall make them afraid; that is, they shall not be disposed to fear each other. There shall be abundance of peace under the dominion of Christ, "For the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn of war any more." (Isa. 2: 4). What a glorious promise! Yes, Christ will gather at his second coming the living nations into judgment. In this glorious future age, thus described by the prophet, the nations shall walk in the name of the Lord. Thus, let us pray, as is given in Revelation 22: 20 as the last prayer of the Bible, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: In what ways are the "hearts of men failing them for fear" in this present age? What should the church seek to do today to prepare for that future age of peace?

III. PROPHECY CONCERNING THE FIRST ADVENT OF CHRIST (Micah 5: 2-5)

In the two preceding topics of this lesson, covering the first part of chapter four, the prophet Micah spoke of the glory and victory of the church which should come to pass in future time. In the last section of the chapter, and the first verse of chapter five, Micah presents the state of Zion, which was a state of confusion and corruption. But he, in verses 2 to 5 in the fifth chapter, points

to the beginning of the Christian era, the birth of Christ. Micah declared, about seven hundred years before the first Advent, that Christ would be born in Bethlehem, verse 2. **Yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.** Note also, about two hundred years later (about 520 B. C.) the prophet Zechariah uttered the same prediction concerning the birth of the Messiah. He said: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy Kingdom cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation" (Zech. 9: 9). Through his prophets God had made known to his people that the holy One, his Son, would come as King to rule in peace. Remember, Bethlehem in Judah, the city of Boaz and Ruth, of Obed, Jesse and David, was selected centuries before as the birthplace of our Lord. God had purposed to make this known to Israel, and to assure the people that he would be the Savior of men, teaching the true way to eternal life.

In verse three the prophet told the people that **the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.** Let us believe that all, Jew and Gentile alike, who would return unto him, he would not be ashamed to call them his brethren (Heb. 2: 11). The prophet Isaiah said, "For though the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return" (Isa. 10: 22). Malachi, who prophesied between 445—432 B. C., said, "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4: 6). During Christ's ministry on earth, many in Israel did turn unto the Lord. Religious worship in Jerusalem and in other places in Palestine was revived, and many sought to hear the teachings of Jesus.

Micah foretold the people that **he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord,** verse 4. This was the assurance

that he would be the glorious Prince, and that his followers would be happy under his government. He would be the Shepherd, the Prince of peace, and the government would be on his shoulders. He would stand, guide his sheep and lead them into green pastures; he would feed, give them the Bread of life; and he would, in the name of the Lord his God, lead them in the straight and narrow way. Yes, in the strength of the Lord, he shall do this declared the prophet. What happy assurance God made known to his people! Think how this same Shepherd today will guide his sheep if they will simply trust him! Note, he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matt. 7: 29). These were precious promises of God's love which were made known by the prophet to Israel. "Now he shall be great to the ends of the earth, for the uttermost parts of the

earth shall be given him for his possession, and the ends of the world shall see his salvation."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. IV.** His church shall abide always, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. "He will yet be Israel's Shepherd. They have refused to enter His fold, but they will look upon Him whom they pierced, will accept Him and serve Him, and become a great evangelizing force in His kingdom" (Rom. 11: 15).—**The Teacher's Guide by James R. Kaye.**

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: At the time of this prophecy, what was the condition of Israel? How did the Jews receive Christ as the Messiah? How did Micah say he would rule the people?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Christ's Conquest.—Micah 5: 8-15; 6:1-8; Isa. 41: 15, 16; Hos. 5: 14; Ps. 10: 12; 21: 8.

LESSON IV

APRIL 28, 1940

Isaiah Comforts an Afflicted People (Isaiah 40:1-11)

Golden Text: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1.

THE PRINTED TEXT: ISAIAH 40: 1-11 (Authorized Version)

1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together:

er: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:

7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up,

be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

10 Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: The time cannot be definitely ascertained, but it was probably about 701 B. C.

Place: The city of Jerusalem.

Persons: Isaiah and the children of Israel.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Isaiah 61: 7; Job 42:10.

T.—Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6.

W.—John 1:23; Isaiah 45:2.

T.—Psalm 90:5; John 12:34; 1 Peter 1:25.

F.—Isaiah 59:16; 62:11.

S.—Rev. 22:12.

S.—John 10:11; Hebrew 13:20; I Peter 2:25; 5:4.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson falls within the Second Part of Isaiah's prophecy, which embraces the last twenty-seven chapters (40-66). This section of his prophetic words is called the Book of Consolations. He prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, who ruled from 810-697 B. C. He was preceded by the prophet Joel, but was contemporary with the prophets Amos, and Hosea of Israel, and Micah of Judah. This lesson is concerning the good tidings to come as prophesied by Isaiah, and the power of the Lord which he said would be great.

I. ISAIAH'S COMFORTING

ANNOUNCEMENT

(Isaiah 40:1, 2)

In the first two verses of chapter forty, God is speaking through Isaiah to his people. Remember, the prophet is speaking from the standpoint of the end

of the Exile, which occurred 536 B. C., Ezra 1:2. Isaiah, prophesying over a period of about sixty years (758-698 B. C.), and during the reigns of four kings, was looking into the future in these verses. The assurance of deliverance and restoration of the captives in Babylon by Cyrus are the comforting words given here to Israel. Note the consolations which God desired his people to receive through his prophet. **Comfort ye my people, saith your God.** God had mercy in store for his people, and he sent Isaiah to encourage them with the assurance that their iniquity is pardoned. Even in the worst of times, it is God's will that his people may be comforted. It is the duty of ministers to do what they can to comfort God's people, and to assure them of his long-suffering and tender mercies. **Speak ye comfortable words to Jerusalem.** This is specific reference to the children of Israel. They had been humbled by the 70 years of captivity of their brethren in Babylon. Isaiah spoke God's blessed assurance to the heart of Jerusalem that they might hear and be comforted. "It is when Israel is in the extremity of her anguish that the divine voice sounds from heaven in strains of music 'comfort ye my people'."—Peloubet's Select Notes. From these lines of the prophet may we take comfort for our souls in times of great distress and chastening. Matthew Henry expresses the consolations of Israel thus:

"Cry out unto her: cry aloud, to show saints their comforts, as well as to show sinners their transgressions."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. III.**

Her warfare is accomplished. Her iniquity is pardoned; God is reconciled to her, and his people had been sufficiently punished. The campaign is at an end, and the cause of her trouble is removed. The class will note, God's people had brought upon themselves this iniquity by their transgressions against him, and he had suffered their lands to be plundered by the enemy, and many of their people to be carried into captivity by the Assyrian men of war. It is true, human life is a struggle, a warfare, as Job points out (Job 7:1), but the conflict will not last always. Though the sins of Israel were many, yet God was merciful and willing to speak comfort to their hearts. Sinners today can find lasting peace and comfort only in the eternal God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is the basic teaching given here in the words of the prophet?

II. PROPHECY CONCERNING THE COMING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (Isaiah 40:3-5)

By some Bible scholars, these verses have been explained as referring to the release of the captives from the Babylonian Exile; namely, the preparing of the way of the Lord to restore them to their land; and in a typical way they apply to the coming of John the Baptist. "That the return from the Exile was a preparation for the bringing forth of the Messiah, by the re-establishment of Judah and the divine institutions in their own land, is true."—**The Teacher's Guide by James R. Kaye.**

The student is to note here that the prophet uttered these prophetic words five hundred years before the birth of John the Baptist. Moreover, the ministry of John the Baptist, as foretold by

Isaiah to the children of God, is a true interpretation, as is seen in the use of the passages (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3: 4-6). These references point to the fore-runner of Christ, and are New Testament interpretations, or verifications of this Old Testament prophecy. John the Baptist was that voice of one crying in the wilderness, for his business, through the divine purpose of God, was to prepare the way of the Lord.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. John preached repentance of sin (Matthew 2: 5), and urged the people to make ready for the coming of the Lord (Luke 1:17b). He bid them to cast aside all that would be offensive to his entrance into their hearts, and to make room for his appearing. He was to pave the way, by exhorting the people to repent and believe the prophetic words of the prophet, and be ready to receive the Messiah who would soon appear. This was a call to duty, to return to God and believe the Gospel. Just so today, it is our duty to open our hearts and let Christ come into our lives. "We must get into the frame of the spirit as will dispose us to receive Christ and his Gospel."—**M. H.**

Make straight . . . a highway for our God. These words are figurative, and may be taken thus: Let us not stand in our own light, but prepare for the salvation, and find or make an highway; that is, open the doors of sin and unbelief of our hearts and let him come in. "If he prepare the end for us, we ought surely to prepare the way for him."—**Matthew Henry.** Crooked and corrupt lives are deviating from the straight and narrow way, and are led by the forces of evil to destruction (Matthew 7: 13, 14). When the vile sinner has turned from his crooked paths of covetousness, greed, jealousy and strife against his fellow-man unto God in penitence and faith in the Gospel, then it can be said that he has made straight a highway leading into

his heart for the Lord—"the uneven path made smooth."

"Those that are hindered from comfort in Christ, by a proud conceit of their own merit and worth, are the mountains and hills that must be made low. Those that have entertained prejudices against the Word and ways of God, that are untractable, and disposed to thwart and contradict even that which is plain and easy because it agrees not with their corrupt inclinations and secular interests, are the crooked that must be made straight, and the rough places that must be made plain."—Matthew Henry's Commentary, Volume III.

It is certain that the prophet made it clear in these verses; first, that the fore-runner of the promised Messiah would come, preaching repentance; and, second, that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. This blessed assurance was to make known to the children of Israel God's word aforetime, and to direct them to look forward to that day of the coming of the Messiah.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How were the people to make straight a highway for the coming of the Lord? What are we to do today to make ready for the return of the Lord?

III. THE ABIDING WORD OF GOD (Isaiah 40:6-8)

The word of our God shall stand for ever. What a comforting promise! God assured not only Israel, but also all humankind for all time that his word shall abide always. These are definite and consoling words of Isaiah, the Evangelical Prophet, as he preached, with zeal and definiteness of purpose, to the Jews in Jerusalem the message which God desired his people to receive. The seasons come and go; new life springs up and grows for a time; death and decay come to both the vegetable and the animal kingdoms as time goes on; nations rise and fall;

and men's mortal works perish from the earth; but God's Word shall be enduring through all ages. What it holds for the good of mankind is from everlasting to everlasting, for it has been ordained of God. God's Word is man's supreme dependence. It is the eternal truth. It is the chart and compass to guide all humanity over their earthly journey, and to point out to everyone the way to heaven.

Upon the dependence on God's Word, all people must be led to admit that **all flesh is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit (breath) of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass,** verse 7. Job tells us that man "cometh forth like a flower, and continueth not" (Job 14:2). The power of man, when depended upon for deliverance, is not to be trusted, for it is but as grass in comparison to the Word of the Lord. When we depend entirely upon God's word for deliverance from sin, we are then exercising faith in his power to redeem us. Men's power and riches are transitory, lasting only for a season, and then fade as the flower of the grass (James 1:10). As a hot wind will dry up the grass and wilt the tender leaves, so epidemics, famines, floods, earthquakes, wars, diseases of many kinds, and approaching old age will, ultimately, take mankind to his death. Thus it is true, everything lovely and bright in human life soon wilts and dies. Man's only hope is his salvation through the New Birth in Christ Jesus. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23), as the apostle here states, is the fundamental truth as taught by Christ concerning salvation. In the light of eternal good, and of ultimate salvation, people must be convinced of the enduring truth of God's Word, and of the vanity of man's power within itself to save him from eternal damnation. May we refer to the apostle Peter: "And this is the word

which by the gospel (of good tidings which) is preached unto you" (I Peter 1:25). May we note also that the "word of the Lord," as given by Isaiah, is the "word of the Lord" which Peter gave in the above passages, and in line with our Lord's teaching concerning the New Birth. Man's eternal destiny depends upon God's enduring word: first, by his acceptance of and obedience to his teachings, he is promised eternal salvation; but, second, by his unbelief and wilful rejection of its precepts, he is doomed to certain destruction.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is embraced in the statement, "The word of our God shall stand for ever"? Why cannot one depend on himself or upon mankind for his salvation?

IV. THE GOOD TIDINGS PROCLAIMED (Isaiah 40:9-11)

In verse five the prophet declared that **the glory of the Lord shall be revealed**. This glory was to be made known to Zion and to Jerusalem. The remnant of the people; that is, those who had been left in the land after the captivity, and those that had been born since that time, were to receive gladly the coming of the Lord. A messenger of good tidings to Zion was to come, and to declare the glory of the Lord. Remember, the angels were the first who heralded the birth of Jesus to the shepherds on the hills. In this sense they were God's heavenly evangelists who proclaimed the glory of the Lord in their songs to the shepherds, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all men."

Now, note that the good news was published, according to prophecy, by Jesus and his disciples to the cities of Judah, and also in other places in Palestine. **Lift up thy voice with strength; . . . say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.** This good news, the gospel of Christ, they were to receive—to behold

their Lord and accept his word. This good news was taken first to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." God desired the message to be taken to his wayward people first, for their need of salvation was great to behold.

The Lord will come with a strong hand. Note how emphatic Isaiah makes this expression, "with a strong hand." The Lord will have power, for God has declared it; he shall reign in defiance of all opposition, for his arm shall rule for him. Remember, what is declared here is the Kingship of Jesus. Moreover, his office work, as set forth in the Scriptures, is of a three-fold nature; namely, Prophet, Priest and King. He was Prophet and Priest in his first coming; but in his second coming, he will be King. Men's corrupt rule of government shall fail them; the Satanic powers in the earth shall give way; and the Church of Christ shall be fully set up, "gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It is definitely promised that the Prince of peace shall rule supremely in that day. **Behold, his reward is with him**, verse 10b. As the righteous Judge, he shall recompense to each one according to his works. Punishments for the rebels, the hard-hearted and disobedient, will be certain to come; but the preferments, joys and eternal happiness, will be given to the faithful ones. Think how the reward for the faithful is great, but note how awful is the punishment of the wicked! He shall accomplish his purpose, for his death on the cross shall not be in vain. Nor shall your life and mine be lived in vain if we will follow the teachings of the Prince of peace.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. Isaiah here assures the people of Israel that this Messiah, with the pity and the tenderness of a good shepherd, will feed God's children with the sincere milk of the Word. He will be the Good Shepherd (John 10: 11), and will take care of his sheep with the eternal word. Let us

think, therefore, of his word as the spiritual food for his flock to feed upon; his gospel ordinances, as the fields for them to feed in; and his ministers, as the under-shepherds who are appointed to carefully attend them. He gives special care, may we think, to the "lambs"; that is, to the young converts, to the weak believers, and to those of a sorrowful spirit. He will gather them in the arms of his love, of his strength, for his strength is made perfect in their weakness (II Cor. 12: 9). When they are depressed and wander away, he will tenderly call them; when they are tired and weary, sick and faint, he will caress

them; and when they fall in foul ways and are led into evil environments, he will gently entreat them unto his fold. By his word he will heal them.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe how the glory of the Lord was made known to Israel? How was Christ received by the strict Jewish worshippers? Why did he not rule as King when he was on earth?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: God's Greatness over the Nations—Isa. 40:21-25; Ps. 19: 1; Acts 14: 17; Rom. 1: 19, 20; Jer. 10: 12; Deut. 4: 15.

LESSON V

MAY 5, 1940

Isaiah Gives God's Invitation (Isaiah 55:1-11)

Golden Text: Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Isaiah 55:6.

THE PRINTED TEXT: ISAIAH 55: 1-11

(Authorized Version)

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

6 Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near;

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Not definitely given, but the date was probably about 701 B. C.

Place: In Jerusalem.

Persons: Isaiah and the children of Israel.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—John 4: 14; 7: 37; Rev. 3: 18.

T.—II Sam. 7: 12-29; Ps. 89: 29; Acts 13: 34.

W.—Jer. 30: 9; Dan. 9: 25; Hos. 3: 5.

T.—Isa. 52: 15; Eph. 2: 11, 12.

F.—John 8: 21; II Cor. 6: 1, 2.

S.—Ps. 130: 7; Jer. 3: 12; Zech. 8: 17.

S.—II Sam. 7: 19; Isa. 54: 9.

THE INTRODUCTION

May the class note in this lesson, as was mentioned in the foregoing lesson, that the Second Part of Isaiah's prophecy (chapters 40-66) was written from the standpoint of the Restoration from Captivity. Much careful and prayerful reading of the parallel scripture references will be necessary for the student to get a clear understanding of this lesson. It is taken from chapter 55 which contains the very soul or essence of the gospel. It sets forth the manner in which the sinner is to accept the work of grace in his heart. The student will note how it brings us close to the New Testament, for example, where Christ calls to the burdened hearts in these words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

I. GOD'S INVITATION TO ISRAEL

(Isa. 55: 1, 2)

What was this invitation? What was Israel's great need at the time of Isaiah's preaching to them? Is it not true that God knew their greatest need in that day just as he knows the greatest need of the races of people today? The prophet gave the invitation to **every one that thirsteth**. This included not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles, all who

hunger and thirst after righteousness. The deep needs of the soul are promised to be filled by the Lord, for he who gave us our spiritual nature can alone provide, by his divine grace, for all its needs. Through his messenger, the heavenly Father is pleading in this passage for everyone who thirsts to come and drink of the water of life.

This gospel invitation is free for all who will accept God's spiritual blessings. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21: 6b). Note again in Revelation, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22: 17b). **He that hath no money** is invited to partake of this Bread of life. How wonderful it is! The gospel invitation is given **freely without money and without price**. The poorest person has the same chance to drink of this water and to eat of this bread as has the individual of wealth. Without money and without price, the wine and the milk of God's spiritual graces are for all who will accept freely this gospel invitation to a place in his eternal kingdom. Remember, it is a divine gift, as free as the air we breathe, and as pure as the dew from heaven. It is God's will that everyone be provided for by the water and the bread of life. This thought may be summarised thus: (1) the gift of salvation is precious and cannot be bought with silver and gold; (2) this invitation is freely extended to all out of God's own love for his children; (3) Christ paid with his own blood on the cross the price for our sins (1 Pet. 1: 19); and (4) all are not only welcome, but are invited to the benefits of eternal life.

The sinner who tries to satisfy the

cravings of his heart by material means, by wasteful spending of money, and of his own strength is representative of the class of people, let us think, Isaiah has reference to in these words: **Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?** That is to say, Why do you spend your living for the frivolous and non-essential things of this life? What profit have you realized from such spending? God calls attention here to this type or class of individuals, **Hearken diligently unto me.** Use your substance wisely, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Feed your soul upon the Bread of life, for the vain things of this world are not proper food for the soul. "Eternal truth and eternal good are the only food for a rational and immortal soul."—**Matthew Henry. Hear, and your soul shall live.** The promise is life for the soul of those who will hear. Yes, they must hear the gospel invitation, and accept God's eternal Word. "It is the same for every age and every one."—**Dr. James R. Kaye.**

I will make an everlasting covenant with you, verse 3b. God is so merciful that he is ever willing to offer his blessed gifts to fallen humanity. Note, this covenant of peace and eternal salvation shall be everlasting. God's mercies shall be upon all who will become a part of this covenant; that is, seek his mercies and accept his gift of the Bread of life. His mercies shall be such mercies as God promised to David (Ps. 79: 28, 29), being called the mercies of his servant. It is a sure covenant, for God has declared it by his prophet Isaiah. This covenant was fulfilled in the coming of the blessed Son, who came as Prophet and Priest, and who will return to be King over the earth. We learn that in David's last days he expressed his confidence in God's covenant in these words: "He hath made with me an everlasting

covenant, ordered in all things, and sure" (II Sam. 23: 5).

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Is it true that there is implanted in us a spiritual thirsting and hungering as truly as we have physical appetites? Must we comply with the spiritual order to reap God's spiritual blessings? What is required of men for God to satisfy the souls as food satisfies the body?

II. CHRIST THE DIVINE WITNESS (Isa. 55: 4, 5)

In verse four, reference is made to Christ. **Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people.** Isaiah here is looking down the future to the time when Christ would come to Israel, for he shall be the Witness to all people. "Christ is given for a witness that God is willing to receive us into his favor, upon gospel terms, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, that we may venture our souls upon those promises with entire satisfaction."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. III.**

As the Prophet and Priest, Christ did testify God's will toward men while he was on the earth. The truth is, all people everywhere should believe and accept his testimony. Note here, Christ the Witness is given as a **leader and commander to the people.** Upon his second coming, he will be King over all nations. Remember what he said to Pilate relative to his Kingship: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18: 37). He will rule the world with righteousness and judgment, for the nations will be committed to him. When that day shall come, it will be a peaceful reign, a time when God's truth shall triumph gloriously over the whole earth. From the highways and hedges, the Gentile nations will be favored as they have never been before. Yes, **Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee,** verse 5. "Those

that had long been afar off from Christ shall be made nigh; and those that had been running from him shall run to him."—**M. Henry.** The Bible tells us that he will be given the heathen, the Gentiles, for his inheritance. In that day there shall be many believing Gentiles who will come to Christ, who, being lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men unto him (John 12: 32). In our own day all people should draw themselves to Jesus, take him as their personal Savior, for he is the only Mediator between man and God. Note Isaiah's words: **they shall run unto thee.** This denotes, let us believe, the eagerness and the earnestness with which they shall be drawn unto Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. In that glorious day of the Lord, the forces of Satan will give way to Christ's triumphant Church. What a blessed thought it is to behold! Hence, may we conclude with the thought that it is the Christian's duty today to exercise his Christian influence in such ways as to lead or draw sinners to Christ. As in Isaiah's day, just so now the nations are wicked and millions of people are following in the ways of the world. Several autocratic governments, by force of arms and the aggressive spirit, are crushing some of the smaller nations with war, devastation, and intense human suffering. But when Christ shall return, he will judge them according to their evil works, and unrighteous living.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: From what you have learned in this topic, What is each individual's responsibility to God? To his fellow-man?

III. SEEKING AND FINDING GOD

(Isa. 55: 6, 7)

If God is to be sought and found, and we believe he is, then the intimation is that the lost are in a state of separation from God. Thus, it follows that those living in sin are entreated by the prophet to come back to God. All servants of

God should urge sinners to seek the Lord. **Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.** Upon the terms of the Gospel, here is granted pardon to the wicked, and to the unrighteous, who will forsake their evil ways, mercy is promised. The words of the prophet suggest here that the time for seeking God may be very short. Salvation is a present need of everyone who is lost in sin, and people are to seek God's mercies **while he may be found.** We read in God's word where the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6: 3). Also remember in the Parable of the Ten Virgins how the five foolish virgins came to the Lord saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," and note how the Lord replied, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Matt. 25: 11, 12). Israel needed to be reconciled to God; she needed to call upon him while he is near, for she had need of repentance and of the forgiveness of her sins. Yes, the wicked and unconverted Jew and Gentile alike must forsake their ways, their evil and corrupt ways of living, and turn to God for mercy and pardon.

The unrighteous man must give up his evil thoughts; that is, cease thinking and planning evil against his fellow-man. Too many people today are planning deliberately to get, by illegal means and in an unchristian way, things that rightfully belong to others. They should forsake such bad habits, repent, and **return unto the Lord.** They should learn to pray the prayer of the publican, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18: 13). **He will abundantly pardon.** He is a just God, for he will grant pardon to all who will earnestly seek him; he is a reasonable God, for he knows the frailties of man, and will be longsuffering. The prophet has said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like

crimson they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1: 18). Isaiah called the people to reason. He urged them to think the matter through, trust God, and abide by his word. Let us note here that God will abundantly pardon us. He will blot out our transgressions. He will call us his loving children, when we renounce our sins, seek him at the throne of grace, and walk in the straight way. We must be reconciled to God by coming to him. The Israelites needed to have carried out this very truth. But many of them, as so many people today have done, failed to heed the words of God's messenger. Obedience to the word of God is the essential thing for everyone.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is involved in the statement **return unto the Lord while he may be found?** Why is it more difficult for the sinner to forsake some sins than others? Is there such a thing as a person sinning away his day of grace?

IV. GOD'S THOUGHTS GREATER THAN MAN'S WAYS (Isa. 55: 8-11)

God's thoughts are immeasurable and unbounded, and as perfect as he is perfect. They are, therefore, infinitely higher and different from the thoughts of mankind. Sinful men have thoughts that are low, degrading and impure in the sight of God. Such thoughts tend to lead the individual in the ways of evil and away from God. People should not only refrain from thinking evil thoughts, but should form the habit of thinking noble thoughts, and of walking in the right way before the Lord. They should think of pure and holy things, things that will contribute to character building and noble living. Such are marks of noble characters.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, verse 9.' This is illustrative of the great difference existing between God and fallen man, for man is base and sinful; whereas God is high and holy, ever ready to forgive those who seek his grace. Because of this difference between man and his Creator, there is grave need for man to change his ways and to seek a closer relationship with God. Man's ways are corrupt, for he possesses the tendency to sin; and consequently he is easily led by the forces of evil to go deeper into sin. God is not to step down from his high and holy place, but man is to look up and seek his salvation at the throne of grace.

Isaiah declared that God's Word shall not return unto him void. This assures us, first, that the promises of God shall not fail; and, second, that Christ's coming into the world shall not be in vain. "As surely as this is true of the forces of nature (verse 10), and that they never fail to achieve what is designed thereby, in like manner my Word, like the descending, fertilizing rain, having the power to renew and to regenerate human hearts and bring forth a new life, will be fulfilled in its mission."—**Dr. James R. Kaye.**

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is it that causes man's thoughts and ways to be counted lower than God's thoughts? What must man do to change his thoughts and ways to meet God's approval?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Joy and Blessing that Shall Ultimately Prevail over the Earth.—Isa. 55: 12, 13; 11: 6-8; 35: 1, 2, 10; 41: 19; Ps. 96: 12; 98: 8; Jer. 13: 11; Micah 7:4; Rom. 8:18-22.

LESSON VI

MAY 12, 1940

Habakkuk Fights Through Doubt to Faith

(Habakkuk 1:2—2:1-4)

Golden Text: The just shall live by his faith. Habakkuk 2:4.

THE PRINTED TEXT: HABAKKUK 1: 12-17 and 2: 1-4
(Authorized Version)

12 Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

14 And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?

15 They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad.

16 Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag;

because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.

17 Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

* * *

1 I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

2 And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: In point of time this prophecy follows closely that of Nahum, which was about 604 B. C., and in the reign of king Jehoiakim.

Place: It is uncertain where this prophecy was uttered.

Persons: Habakkuk and the people of Judah.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Habak 1: 1-11; II Kings 19: 25; Ps. 90: 2; Isa. 10: 5.

T.—Jer. 12: 1; 16: 16; Am. 4: 2.

W.—Deut. 8: 17; Isa. 10: 13; 37: 24, 25.

T.—Ps. 5: 3; 85: 8; Isa. 21: 8.

F.—Deut. 27: 8; Rev. 1: 19; Dan. 10: 14; 11: 27, 35.

S.—Heb. 10: 37; John 3: 36; Rom. 1: 17.

S.—Gal. 3: 11; Heb. 10: 38.

THE INTRODUCTION

Habakkuk was the eighth in order of

the Minor prophets. He was of the tribe of Levi. His prophecy deals with the Chaldeans who later overthrew Judah, and carried the people to Babylon in captivity. Habakkuk's mission was to announce the downfall of Babylon after Judah had been sufficiently punished for her iniquities. He was contemporary with Jeremiah and Nahum. For beauty of thought and figurative expression, chapter three is given as an ode or in lyric form, expressive of the prophet's petition of mercy for Israel, and the repetition of the opening vision of

Jehovah. The class should study it in connection with this lesson.

I. HABAKKUK'S COMPLAINT OF THE SAD STATE OF JUDAH (Hab. 1: 12-17)

What had brought about this state of Judah? According to history, Judah had been living in great apostasy, in disobedience to God's covenant, for practically a century before Habakkuk uttered this prophecy. To satisfy the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, who was waging war against Judah, Hezekiah, near the close of his reign, "took all the silver vessels of the holy Temple; cut off the gold with which he himself had overlaid the doors and pillars of the Temple; and sent them to Sennacherib as tribute for the price exacted of him." When he died in 698 B. C., his son Manasseh, who became king of Judah started a fatal reaction in the religious policy of the kingdom. He introduced every form of false religion possible; permitted the practice of every vice that had ever been borrowed from outlying, heathen nations; introduced the worship of Baal in the high places; profaned the holy Temple by displacing the Ark of the Covenant, and setting in its stead and idol figure for worship in the Sanctuary. He had built a stately temple to Molock at Tophet in the valley of Hinnom; and he "seduced the people to do more wickedness than the nations whom Jehovah had destroyed before them." He led the princes to commit greater sins against God's covenant. He had "filled Jerusalem with innocent blood which Jehovah would not pardon." This was the crowning sin which doomed the nation to captivity several years later. Jeremiah says, "Your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion." Tradition has it that Isaiah was the first of this persecution, being sawn asunder in the trunk of a tree by the order of Manasseh. (See Dr. William Smith's History of the Bible, pp. 429-433; and Bible Dictionary, pp. 267.)

Although king Josiah set himself to work to turn Judah back to God from the idolatrous practices of Manasseh, and to set up true worship in Jerusalem and other high places, the nation as a whole remained in a sad state. When he died, the succeeding kings reverted to the old religious policy of idolatrous worship. Thus we see that the state of Judah was bad when Habakkuk spoke his prophetic words to the people.

Now, concerning this, the second complaint which is found in verses 12 to 17, and before studying it the student will note, by reading the first four verses of this chapter, Habakkuk's first complaint of Judah's iniquity. The prophet is greatly grieved over Judah's violence and disregard for God's holy covenant. He sees how she is bringing God's wrath upon her for her idolatrous worship and corrupt ways of living. Her impending doom was sure to come, for God had informed his prophet of the captivity that would be visited upon Judah. It was revealed to him that the Chaldeans from the East would come upon them, wage war against Judah, and carry away many of the people to Babylon to be held in captivity, leaving only a remnant behind. Thus, the prophet is made to cry unto the Lord, saying, **Art thou not from everlasting?** Are you not all wise and merciful? Will you suffer the righteous to be punished with the wicked? Surely, there are some in Judah who have not forsaken your covenant. Oh, Lord, we shall not die! Thou art too good to cut us off. The prophet reasons: the God of Israel shall not suffer his people to be extirpated, nor the name blotted out. Because of thy mercy we shall live. Habakkuk had hope for the righteous.

Thou hast established them for correction. Babylon, here, is used as an instrument to accomplish God's divine ends regarding his kingdom. Yes, because of Judah's wickedness and transgressions against God, he permits later on the

strong Chaldeans to invade the land and scatter the people. Think what a lesson it must have been to Judah! And what a lesson it is for all time! Remember, they had been reminded aforetime by the prophets of their iniquities, but Judah failed to listen to Jehovah, and her sins found her out. Why can't the nations and peoples of the earth today take this lesson to heart? Why don't they stop and think that, the same God who suffered his chosen people to be punished, will also inflict just punishment in his own good time upon those who have torn down his altars, driven out his messengers, and are waging wars because of the spirit of aggression against the innocent and peace-loving nations? This same principle may be applied to individuals as well, for God's Word teaches that man is to be his brother's keeper, and not his brother's dreaded and suspicious enemy.

Thou canst not look on iniquity. Habakkuk reasons that God cannot be indifferent to sin; that he is not pleased to see his people going astray; and that oppression and servitude are not what he would rejoice to see imposed on mankind. But why are the Chaldeans permitted to work evil upon those under their power? Might of man's strength does not always make right. Nor does a loving father rejoice in punishing a disobedient child, but he will suffer it to be done for the chastisement of his disobedient children because of the love which he has for them. Accordingly, may we note, that in God's moral order, surely the might of right, God's divine will, must take precedence over the right of man's might. The prophet's apt figures of speech are striking here in describing the oppression of Babylon: **Makes men as the fish of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no rule over them.** That is, the tributary nations are helpless. Babylon drops the net and gathers them under her power. By her might she has

power to enslave those caught in the dragnet. Thus her power becomes her god of worship. But note, it was revealed to Habakkuk that the Chaldean empire would be allowed by the heavenly Father to bring the kingdom of Judah to an end, but later she, too, would come to an end. The prophet questions, Why is she permitted to thus lord it over weaker nations? Is not God a righteous God? Why should a big brother be allowed to crush a small brother? But this question of Habakkuk is the question of many oppressed people today. They don't understand why God is permitting them to suffer so severely. It was the problem of Job. We do not understand why God allowed Paul and others to persecute the early Christians as they did without speedy punishment. Many are asking the question today, Why is God permitting the strong, aggressor nations to be crushing the weaker nations in Europe? Has God given them up? Does he not care? Yes, he does care, and let us believe that the present world conditions will result in ultimate good according to God's own will.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Was God unjust by suffering Judah to be led into captivity? Is it right for parents to punish disobedient children? In what spirit should punishment be inflicted?

II. THE LORD'S ANSWER TO THE PROPHET'S COMPLAINT

(Hab. 2: 1-4)

In verse one, chapter two, the prophet declared that he would watch and wait for the Lord's answer, for he believed God would speak to him. **I will stand upon my watch.** I will wait patiently to see what the Lord will say to me. God only can answer questions which involve God's concern about matters of moral and spiritual government. Note, the prophet here will wait upon the Lord, and observe carefully the steps of his divine Providence. It is truly the atti-

tude which one in need should take of divine information coming from the heavenly Father. Note the prophet's patient and watchful waiting! Habakkuk believed God would answer in his own good time, and in his own good way. Here is faith coupled with watchful waiting. He set himself upon the watch-tower, figuratively speaking, to catch the first sound of God's voice. This intimates the prophet's eagerness to hear; his separation from the crowd, the world, to quietly wait upon the Lord; and to maintain the attitude of silent waiting for the divine answer.

Is it not true, everyone who wish to hear from the Lord must withdraw from the world, get above the stir of things, and center their attention upon God? Must they not guide their thoughts carefully, study the scriptures prayerfully, continue instant in prayer, and thus set themselves upon the tower of faithful and watchful waiting upon the Lord? As the prophet was willing to wait, just so should we not be willing to wait on the Lord? He was willing to wait long, let us think, to know what God would say to him. Are we willing to be patient and see what God will do for us? Are we? Is the world waiting today upon the Lord?

Let us take an example here from Habakkuk. When we are perplexed and are in doubt concerning the methods of divine Providence, then let us meditate upon God's goodness and sure promises. When we are tempted to think that it is fate or fortune that controls the world, and not God, then we should stop and reason that things do not happen by mere chance. We must be willing to be patient, believing in the divine order of things, and to hear what God, the Lord, will speak to us. When we go to God in prayer, pouring out our complaints, or offering up our thanksgiving to him, we must carefully observe his answer. David said, "In the morning will I direct

my prayer unto thee, and I will look up" (Ps. 5: 3). People must look up, and not give way to their doubts. Remember, in Habakkuk's questioning, he looked to God for the answer, nor did God fail him. He will not fail us today if we will but look to him in faith. We are to study the Word of God to know his will toward men. The person who knows his Bible has found the answer to his troublesome questions, for to know the truth of God's Word is to know the way to solve one's problems. We are assured that there is comfort in knowing God's Word, and in abiding by its teachings.

God never fails to answer honest, patient souls. Hear his answer: **Write the vision, make it plain upon tables,** verse 2. Note the command! The prophet was to write it plain upon tables, the scroll used in Habakkuk's day. This vision which God wished his people to receive must be plainly written; its importance so great that God's people should read it; and that it might be preserved for future time. Things handed down by tradition are easily misunderstood or forgotten, and sometimes wilfully corrupted. But the written word will stand. Remember how St. John, when he had that vision of the New Jerusalem, was commanded to write it down that it might be preserved (Rev. 21: 5). God has placed great emphasis upon the weighty matters of his word to mankind. Hence, people are urged all the more to heed his commands.

Note what the vision is: **It is yet for an appointed time.** We are told that the strong Chaldean empire of the East was the instrument used for the purifying of God's people, humbling them before the Lord. The prophets had said Judah would be broken up, and her best people carried to Babylon in captivity for seventy years. But the appointed time for their return was yet in the future. The Chaldean power would be broken, as fixed in the counsel and decree of God,

and his people would return to Palestine. This happened following king Cyrus' decree in 536 B. C. (Ez. 1:1-4). Let us remember that God has an appointed time for his appointed work, therefore, the captives must wait his time. God assured this prophet that Babylon was guilty of excesses, exercising hard and harsh rule over her vassal states and captive peoples, and that judgment would be certain to come upon her. By trusting in her own power and worshipping her own gods of fleshly appetites, she shall be brought to naught, for when God's purpose is accomplished concerning the reformation of Judah, he will lay his hand on Babylon. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in them. Note here, proud Babylon, mistress of the world, and the terror of the nations of that day, shall fall. Why? Her soul is not right! God shall bring her to naught.

But the just shall live by his faith. Note the contrast! Faith in God and an upright heart shall give the honest souls the assurance of continued life. This passage is quoted three times in the New

Testament. Read Rom. 1:17; Gal. 2: 11; Heb. 10: 37, 38. Here is proof of justification by faith. Remember, too, that this thought is a ruling principle of this prophecy. The sense of the passage is given thus by Dr. Driver: "That while the wild excesses of the tyrant (Babylon) carry in them the germ of certain ruin, the 'faithfulness' of the righteous will be to him a principle of life." Those who are made just and upright by faith in the supreme God shall live, for the promise is sure. Study the eleventh chapter of Hebrews for the wonderful promises of God to those who live by faith.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Is God's Word capable of meeting every moral and spiritual problem? Discuss "justification by faith." What scriptures have you to substantiate your grounds for your belief?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Judgment against the Chaldean Empire. —Hab. 2: 5-20; Prov. 27: 20; 30: 16; Jer. 22: 13; 49: 16; Ob. 1: 4; Gen. 9: 22; Hos. 7: 5; Jer. 25: 26, 27; 51: 57.

LESSON VII

MAY 19, 1940

Jeremiah Denounces False Prophets (Jeremiah 23: 21-32)

Golden Text: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. I Thessalonians 5:21.

THE PRINTED TEXT: JEREMIAH 23: 21-32

(Authorized Version)

21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

23 Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?

24 Can any hide himself in secret

places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

25 I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

26 How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart;

27 Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.

28 The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.

29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

31 Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

32 Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Uncertain, probably during the reign of Jehoichin, B. C. 598.

Place: Jerusalem.

Persons: Jeremiah and the people of Judah.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Jer. 14: 14; 27: 15; 29: 9.

T.—I Kg. 8: 27.

W.—Ps. 139: 7; Am. 9: 2, 3.

T.—Ju. 3: 7.

F.—Ju. 8: 33, 34.

S.—Jer. 14: 15.

S.—Deut. 18: 20.

THE INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah received the call to prophesy at an early age while living at Anathoth, a suburb of Jerusalem. His father belonged to the priestly order, and thus Jeremiah was reared in the priestly atmosphere.

King Josiah was on the throne of Judah when Jeremiah uttered his prophetic words. Upon being persecuted in Anathoth where he began his prophecy, he went to Jerusalem which afforded a wider field of service. He, it is believed, aided Josiah in his great revival of true religious worship over the kingdom. Although the four kings who succeeded Josiah subjected Jeremiah to all manner of persecutions, he zealously declared the word of the Lord for over twenty years at the constant risk of his life.

I. GOD'S CRY AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS

(Jer. 23: 21-24)

Let us study God's word concerning the false prophets. I have not sent these prophets. These were certain prophets whom God had not commissioned to speak his word to the people. They had gone forth on their own accord. They were false, for they had not been given the divine authority from the Father. I have not spoken to them. God gives us to understand here in verse 21 that he had not named them to proclaim the prophetic word. They had acted on their own responsibility. Their preaching was in vain; it confused rather than strengthened true religious worship; and was a mock to Almighty God, for it had not the divine approval behind it. When God called his prophets to deliver his messages to the people, he spoke through them, and their messages were the expression of his will.

If they had stood in my council, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, verse 22. Jeremiah declares here that these false prophets had not stood in God's council. They had not sought God's divine authority,

but it was, on the other hand, presumption on their part to assume the right to prophesy to the people. Note, therefore, how they failed to get the people to turn from their evil ways. Remember, Christ spoke of false teachers in his day, speaking of men who would pretend to know divine oracles, and go about uttering false doctrines. But their teachings came to naught. It is true today that there are some in the Lord's work who are not God called ministers. They are an offense to God and are in the way of true Christian progress. It matters not how prominent they are in their ecclesiastical position, how well they can preach, how large is their following, or how great is their salary, not being called of God, they are false to him. Their show of religious works soon fade away. For example, the Sunday School teachers, the missionaries, the auxiliary leaders in the local church work, who are doing religious work with a view or purpose other than that of the spirit of Christ, and in the name of the Lord, will ultimately fail as false teachers and leaders of Christianity. They cannot escape God's notice, for he knows their hearts are not dedicated to the sincere teaching of his word. Any teacher of God's word, who is living in open and wilful sin before the world, is not only condemned before God, but is also standing in the way of those whom they teach. False teaching is always detrimental to the good of all.

Can any hide himself in secret places? Can they hide from God their deception? Does God not see their false teachings? Does God not see the purposes of their hearts? Cannot God, with his all-seeing eye, penetrate the very thoughts of the human heart, and search out the evil intent and purposes of man's false pretensions? He certainly can. He is all wise and ever knows the wickedness of humanity. God found Ahab in Naboth's vineyard, just as he found Jonah in the fish. And just so, these false prophets

could not escape his all-seeing eye. The person today who wilfully defrauds his government, or secretly perpetrates a crime against his fellow-man, however shrewd he carries out his act of deception, cannot hide himself from God. Many may escape the courts of justice and the eye of the public, but God always finds them out. As God heard every word uttered by the false prophets of old, just so he sees today every sinful act of everyone.

Do not I fill heaven and earth? This is a searching question. To the false prophets he was saying: Know you not that I am omnipresent and omniscient? Am I not the God of all creation? May we listen to the psalmist David: "If I ascend up to heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell (Sheol), behold, thou art there. . . . (Ps. 139: 8-12). "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence," said the psalmist again. God heard the false testimony of Ananias and Sapphira to the apostle Peter, and visited sudden death upon them (Acts 5: 1-11). Note also, how God's prophet Elijah on Mt. Carmel had the 450 prophets of Baal slain for their deception and false worship. God's holy messengers have spoken his Word to the people that they might know his will toward them, and obey his words.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did God have Jeremiah speak to the people concerning the false prophets? How does one know when he is called to teach or preach the word of God? Should people insist upon certain religiously inclined young men to enter the ministry?

II. THE CLAIMS OF THE FALSE PROPHETS

(Jer. 23: 25-29)

What did these false prophets claim? What effect did their prophesying have upon the people? It is for us to learn what they claimed in the way of divine revelation or knowledge, and also the in-

fluence which they exerted upon their hearers. Let us note God's word: **I have heard what the prophets said, (they) that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed,** verse 25. They had prophesied lies in the Lord's name, claiming that they had had dreams through divine revelation. It was a notable way of disguising their false pretensions of religion. It is true, God had spoken to men in dreams. This was true of Joseph, of Jacob, Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar and others. In like manner, these false prophets claimed that God had appeared to them. Such was the very essence of hypocrisy. In earlier days, God had warned Moses against such false dreamers who would try to lead the people to follow other gods. But God knew all their impostures, all the sham which they had put upon the world under color of divine revelation. "What they pretended to honour the people with, they pretended to have had from God."—**Matthew Henry.** As they whispered to their confidants, all who were eager to accept their words, God overheard their blasphemous lies against his holy name.

Such was a way to bring true religion into contempt, and to draw people from the worship of the true God. Moreover, such false claims tend to counterfeit divine revelation, by their crediting their own fancies from having sprung from divine inspiration. It is true, Satan's great aim is to lead people away from God by false pretenses. Unfounded pretenses to new revelations often prove as dangerous to Christianity as the denying of all divine inspiration, bringing contempt against God, and causing good men to become infidels and atheists. "False prophets in God's name may do more mischief to the power of godliness than false prophets in Baal's name"—**Matthew Henry.** They were "prophets of the deceit of their own hearts," inducing disloyalty to God.

Cause my people to forget my name.

Moses condemned this very thing in his day. These false prophets told their dreams to their neighbors, leading them to turn from God, as the quotation expresses, "as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal." It is bad enough for a person to be a vile sinner, but he who teaches and leads others from God commits the greater sin.

The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, verse 28. A mere dream is to be told as a dream only. Let these prophets lay no more stress upon a dream than men do upon their dreams. Let them not expect any more regard to be paid to them than is paid to the dreams of other people. But let the true prophet, he who has my word, **speak my word faithfully.** Let him speak it as a truth. Let him who pretends to have a message from God, whether by dream or voice, declare it, and it will easily appear, as some think, which is from God and which is not. Men's fancies, mere dreams, are worthless in the sight of the Lord, as the chaff in the wheat is useless to man. But the word of God, given to his messengers for teaching and exhortation, has great value. It is food for the soul. There is as much difference between the pure word of God and the vain fancies of men as there is between the wheat and the chaff. As the grain of wheat contains the dormant-life factor, which when planted in the earth germinates and produces new life, just so the Word of God, when planted in the heart of man, takes root and brings forth fruit meet for the Master's use.

Is not my word like as a fire? Is it not to purify, to redeem all who will accept it and be saved, and to consume all who will reject it? Note, the law was a fire law (Deut. 33: 2). Notice also what Christ said of the Gospel: "I have come to send fire on the earth" (Luke 12: 49). Fire softens wax, but it hardens clay, thus producing different

effects on different substances. In a similar way, may we liken God's Word: some people are softened, made to repent of their sins; while others resist, become stubborn, and hard-hearted, choking back the Holy Spirit. God's word is likened unto a hammer, breaking into pieces the stony hearts of some who were hard and unwieldy. Such is the power of the word of God when it is applied to the human soul. It beats asunder the chaff from the wheat, thus, may we say, revealing the sinner to himself, and God to the sinner. The stubborn heart of man is like a rock; if it will not be melted, yield to God's will, by his word as the fire, it will be broken to pieces by it as the hammer. The writer of the Book to the Hebrews likens God's word to a twoedged sword: quick, powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit (Heb. 4: 12).

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is God's penalty for false testimony? How is God's Word like a fire and a hammer? How may one distinguish between a mere dream and divine inspiration?

III. GOD DENOUNCED THE FALSE PROPHETS (Jer. 23: 30-32)

In three definite statements God denounced these false prophets. He said, **I am against the prophets, . . . that steal my words every one from his neighbor.** Note, in verse 30 they are denounced for stealing God's words. They pretended to be for God, using his name to back up their arguments, when really they were against him. They were making God a party to their lies. What an awful sin! This denotes, we believe, that the false prophets stole God's word out of the hearts of the people; that is, they led their neighbors to believe their lies. The true prophets had planted the Word, but these false prophets were guilty of stealing from them the prophetic teach-

ings of the Word. In this practice of deception, the false prophets were guilty of using the expression, "Thus saith the Lord." Thus they were, by false pretense, making God the father of their lies. By giving God the credit for what they said, in this manner of deceit, they were better able, they thought, to get the people to believe them. The Devil is the father of lies, and these false prophets were his followers (John 8: 44).

In the next place, these prophets were indicted for their counterfeiting God's word. **That use their tongues, and say, He said.** "They say what they think and father it upon God." They had smooth tongues, saying what was pleasing to their neighbors, but never reprov'd nor threatened them, let us believe. Satan's followers use smooth words to carry their points. But note how impudent they were to make God the patron of their lies. There are smooth tongued people today who, for the sake of personal gain and vain glory, will appear to be sincere as they present their case, and to be honest in their stand which they are taking for some specific cause. But they cannot palm off their deception upon God. James says the tongue is a little member, boasteth of great things, and is a world of iniquity (Jas. 3: 5, 6). Think what an awful thing it was for these false prophets to lay their sin at God's door! Remember Queen Jezebel called upon false witnesses to send Naboth to his certain death. Is it not true today that some people palm off their sins with some kind of excuse? They may not lay their trouble to God, but often they place the blame upon some person.

I am against them that prophesy false dreams, . . . cause my people to err by their lies, and by their vain boasting. In the third place, these false prophets stand indicted, by the heavenly Father, as common cheats, verse 32. God was against them for their false dreams.

They pretended to have had divine inspiration. Their tongues were misused both in stealing the Word, and in causing the people to believe that their lies came from God. Not only did they do these things, but also they boasted of them. Not only did they wilfully commit these errors, but they caused the people to err, believing their false doctrines. Accordingly, God declared never having commissioned them to speak in his name. Since he sent them not to speak to the people, they did them great harm. All who corrupt the Word of God, while they pretend to preach it, are so far from edifying Christ's Church that they do it the greatest mischief imaginable. Being the messengers of Satan, these false prophets worked evil against

the people, for "they shall not profit this people at all." This signifies that they were their moral and spiritual ruination, and at the same time they had brought condemnation against themselves.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What two great sins did the false prophets commit? What does James have to say about the tongue? How do Satan's agents use their tongues to carry their points?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Promise of the Righteous Branch of David.—Jer. 23: 5-8; Isa. 9: 7; Dan. 9: 24; Ze. 6: 12; John 1: 45; Jer. 33: 16; Deut. 33: 28; Ze. 14: 11; I Cor. 1: 30; Jer. 16: 14, 15; Isa. 45: 18, 19.

LESSON VIII

MAY 26, 1940

Jeremiah Announces the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-37)

Golden Text: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jeremiah 31:33b.

THE PRINTED TEXT: JEREMIAH 31: 31-37

(Authorized Version)

31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord;

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them

unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name:

36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

37 Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Between 597 and 587 B.C.

Place: Jerusalem.

Persons: Jeremiah and the people of Judah.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Luke 22: 20; I Corinthians 11: 25; II Corinthians 3: 6.

T.—Jeremiah 3: 14; Deuteronomy 1: 31; Isaiah 63: 12.

W.—Jeremiah 24: 7; 32: 40; Hebrews 10: 16, 17.

T.—Isaiah 11: 9; Micah 7: 18.

F.—Habakkuk 2: 14; I Thess. 4: 9.

S.—Genesis 1: 14, 18; Deuteronomy 4: 19; Psalms 19: 1-6.

S.—Jeremiah 33:22; Isaiah 40: 12; Romans 11: 2-5, 26, 27.

THE INTRODUCTION

The previous lesson contained the Lord's denunciation of the false prophets while this lesson deals with a New dispensation, the New covenant which God promised the people. Beginning with chapter 30, Jeremiah portrays a brighter future for Israel. We must remember that Jeremiah was laboring in the last days of the kingdom of Judah, six hundred years before the coming of Christ. He warned Judah of the impending captivity, encouraged those living in exile to be faithful, and assured them that the restoration would come at God's appointed time, and that a glorious state of things is promised for the future. May the student study this lesson with a great deal of interest in learning what the prophet had to say about the New Covenant, and the glorious state of things for the future.

I. GOD'S NEW COVENANT (Jeremiah 31: 31-33)

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant. This new covenant which is spoken of here with the house of Israel is not limited to

the historical Israel. What is referred to is a larger Israel, the Israel of God, his Church of the gospel dispensation. Matthew Henry says, "The covenant was made with the house of Israel and Judah, with the gospel church, the Israel of God on which peace shall be (Galatians 6: 16)." It is understood that Jews and Gentiles are included in the gospel church. This was the promise which Jeremiah made known to Judah. This new covenant would usher in the New Gospel age which would mark the beginning of the New Gospel dispensation. The prophet views in the distant future the better day. God had revealed to him this vision of the coming of Christ as his only begotten Son. The old covenant would come to a close, and the new age of grace would begin at the birth of Christ. Centuries before, God had delivered his people from the bondage in Egypt, and had entered in a covenant with them to be their God and they to be his people. They were to be faithful and obedient to him.

The law which God gave to Moses was written on tables of stone. It consisted of the moral law and the ceremonial and civil institutions for the direction of their conduct. By the observance of this law or covenant they would be safeguarded against sin, idolatry and from all forms of transgressions against God. This covenant sought to guide all Israel in the right relationships with God, and to lead them in the correct way of life with each other. It is spoken of as the Old Covenant, or the former covenant in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 8: 8-13). As has been noted in the previous lessons of this quarter, the Jews had, from time to time, transgressed God's law, broken his covenant, and had be-

come very sinful, turning to idolatrous worship, and committing all manner of sins against God. Thus we see how Jeremiah and the other prophets of his day cried out against the sins of the people.

"The old covenant is the law-covenant which the Lord did not make with Gentiles, but with Israel exclusively. The new covenant is of grace. The ground of this new covenant is the **sacrificial death** of the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood, as we learn from his own words when he instituted the supper."—Peloubet's *Select Notes*.

I will put my law in their inward parts, verse 33. Note, the New Covenant will be written, not on external matter, as the law given to Moses was on tables of stone, but in the hearts of God's believing children. Let us not suppose just here "that life could not be holy under the old economy, that the Holy Spirit was not operative, or that sin was not as truly forgiven as under the dispensation of grace."—Dr. James R. Kaye, in *The Teacher's Guide*. Dr. Matthew Henry says, "The ordinances and promises are more spiritual and heavenly," in the new covenant, "and the discoveries much more clear." God does write his law in the hearts of his believers. When people have a disposition to obey God, and seek to do his will, he writes plainly his law in their hearts, assuring them that he will be their God, and that they are to be his people. Through obedience to, faith and trust in the supreme God, everyone can be assured of the blessed promise of the law stamped upon their hearts. They shall have knowledge of God, and his ways shall be made known to the people; that is to say, many more shall know God than did in Old-Testament times. "To Gentiles then God was an unknown God, but things in gospel times shall be made more plain, and intelligible than while Moses lived."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What does the New Covenant assure the people that

God will bring to pass? How does it differ from the Old-Testament covenant which God gave to the children of Israel?

II. UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD PROMISED (Jeremiah 31: 34)

"I will give them a heart to know me, . . . for they shall return unto me with their whole heart" (Jeremiah 24:7). Let us remember here that God assured Judah that there would come among the people a general knowledge of him and his word." "The aim of this passage is to exalt the office work of the Holy Spirit. . . . The emphasis is laid upon the greater effectiveness of the Spirit's work under those finer and more perfect spiritual conditions."—J. R. Kaye. It does not mean, on the other hand, that there will not be a place for human teaching of God's Word. What is meant, let us believe, is more public teaching and spreading of the gospel, than in the days of the priests and the prophets, will be made by those who would carry the gospel message to others. Under this new covenant all shall know God. This has not come to pass yet. Much teaching is being done today of God's Word by Protestants, Jews, and Catholics in the world to enlighten the people in the Scriptures, but the time has not come when all know God's word. Let us think the knowledge of God's Word is being obtained today by many people the world over in the following ways: (1) by people frequenting the assemblies of Christian worship; (2) by God's word being printed in the various languages, and distributed among the people in the various countries; (3) by Bible schools and seminaries established in the great nations; and (4) by personal and diligent study of the Word in the mission fields. Jeremiah was looking down the centuries when he uttered these prophetic words. Thus, through such means of acquiring a knowledge of God's Word, there would be less and less need of fraternal teaching,

"by a neighbour and a brother." **They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother,** verse 34. Things of God shall be brought to a clearer light than ever by the gospel of Christ, and God's people shall by the grace of Christ be brought to a clearer light of those things than ever before (Ephesians 1: 17, 18). That is to say, God's Holy Spirit will do his office work in a miraculous way.

Let us look forward to this time which Jeremiah says will come. It is true, the great masses of people today know not and care not about God. Sin is rampant, personal confidence is lost, national greed is the lust of people everywhere, and respect and reverence for God's law is hardly to be found among the great masses of humanity. Slaughter and destruction in the great European and Asiatic countries is the order of the day as war marches on to commit tragedy after tragedy. Such is a clear indication of how far the heart of man is away from God. And the outlook for peace is dark. But, remember, Jeremiah pointed out, for our comfort and the comfort of the world, the blessed hope of the reign of the Prince of Peace, when the world will be filled with the knowledge of God and of righteousness.

I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more, verse 34b. What comforting words! Think how merciful God is! He is a forgiving God, and never has anyone turned with a sincere heart, falling upon God's terms, without receiving a blessing. He remembers no more the sins of those whom he has forgiven. They are blotted out. But think how different some people are! They remember for a long time the petty offenses committed against them. They are like the lord's servant mentioned in Matthew 18: 24-34, who, when he obtained pardon for his large debt due to his lord, went and wilfully refused to forgive his fellow-servant for the small debt owed him.

May the student take a lesson here relative to the great teaching of the spirit of forgiveness, and profit thereby.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How is the knowledge of God's Word being disseminated today over the land? What evidences have we that God's Word has not been planted in all hearts yet? When will God forgive the nations of their iniquities?

III. MAN'S DEPENDENCE UPON THE POWER OF GOD (Jeremiah 31: 35-37)

The prophet declares in these verses God's power over the universe. "He that built all things is God" (Hebrew 3:4). "The mystery, which from the beginning of the world (all ages) hath been held in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3: 9).

Remember, the God who made the glorious promises of the New Covenant is the same God who created the sun, the moon and the stars. They reveal the truth of the omnipotence of God in the universe. The glories of the kingdom of all nature—the animal and the plant kingdoms of the earth—are his handiwork. God has created, set in order, and ever governs the processes of life and matter in the universe. The heavenly bodies are products of his infinite wisdom, and their systems are ordered by him. How significant it is God **gives the sun for a light by day,** verse 35. How wonderful is its light and heat to life on the earth. From the time God created it in the heavens, the sun has been sending its light and heat down the centuries to bless all animal and vegetable life. This power of heat and light from the sun was ordained of God for the glory of his creation. As this heavenly body continuously emits heat and light rays as invigorating power to all animal and vegetable life, just so God, in his infinite wisdom and tender mercies, sends abroad in the world his wonderful love and gracious promises to

warm the hearts of sinful men, and to draw them unto him.

Note again, **God gave the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night**, verse 35b. The motions of the moon and the stars are called **ordinances**, because they are regular, and are determined by fixed rule of the divine Creator. Read Job 38: 31, 33. As God is the Creator and Sustainer of the heavenly bodies, regulates and governs their course in the universe, in like manner he can speak assuredly and authoritatively of what is in store for mankind. As the moon and the stars give soft light to the earth at night, so God sheds his wonderful grace in the hearts of all who will receive it.

The heavens above cannot be measured, nor can the foundations of the earth be searched out by mortal man. Man is finite, but God is infinite; man is limited in his knowledge of the universe, but God knows all things. The astronomers are discovering, from time to time, new planets in the heavens, and the geologists are finding new truths hidden away in the earth, but God only knows the whole truth of the universe. Although people today know more of the universe, of the immensity of the works of God, than in former days, yet man's knowledge is still limited. Granting, then, that God is all powerful and ever merciful, we should bow more humbly before him and trust him more completely. All nature about us proves the infinite wisdom of God, and thus we should be led to adore and worship him with the whole heart.

What comfort have we in the fact that God, has given His Word, his blessed assurances! Before God's promises shall pass, it will be within the power of mortal man to acquire, let us hope, the understanding of the infinite God in the greatness of his created works. Men should take courage, search

the Scriptures, and be guided by God's wonderful promises. Too much thought is given for temporal things and not enough consideration is paid to the mercies of God. People need to get back to the Bible, and study God's word with a view of understanding his will toward mankind. Too many people today claim that they do not have time to worship God and to do service in his great kingdom. Making a living and seeking pleasure occupy their chief concern. The greater is one's understanding of God's wonderful love and blessings which he bestows upon his people, the greater is the joy that can come to the human heart. But some fail to realize this fact. The selfish man who lives for selfish ends only is failing to visualize the future and the meaning which God would have him to understand. How pathetic it is for such people to go on year after year giving little or no concern about the goodness of God and his wonderful promises! All students of the Adult classes should study the Bible with the view of learning more and more of God's word. They should take to heart seriously the sacred teachings laid down in his word for their good. They should seek to apply these spiritual values to their own lives, and to live lives worthy of real Christians.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What proof is there that God is the Creator of the universe? Are we to depend upon his promises?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Some Prophecies Regarding Israel's Final Return: Deuteronomy 30: 1-10; I Kings 8: 34; II Chronicles 6:25; 30:9; Isaiah 10: 21, 22; 11: 11-16; 49: 22, 51; 56: 8; 66: 20; Jeremiah 3: 12-19; 12: 15, 16; Ezekiel 11: 17-20; 20: 33-44; 34:11-16; 36: 21-28; 37: 20-28; 39: 25-29; Amos 9: 14, 15; Zechariah 8: 7, 8; 10: 6-12.

LESSON IX

JUNE 2, 1940

Testing Conduct by Its Usefulness

(Ezekiel 15:1-6; Matthew 5:13-16; 7:16-20; I Corinthians 10:6, 7)

Golden Text: Ye shall know them by their fruits. Matthew 7: 16a.

THE PRINTED TEXT: EZEKIEL 15: 1-6; MATTHEW 5: 13-16;
7: 16-20; I CORINTHIANS 10: 6, 7
(Authorized Version)

1 And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

3 Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?

4 Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?

5 Behold, when it was whole it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?

6 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, As the vine-tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

* * *

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and

put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

* * *

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

* * *

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: The 15th chapter of Ezekiel was written about 591 B. C.; the Sermon on the Mount was delivered in the summer of 28 A. D.; and the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians was written about 56 A. D.

Place: Babylon, Capernaum, and Ephesus.

Persons: Ezekiel, Jesus, the apostle Paul, and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Psalm 80: 8-16; Jeremiah 2:21; Hosea 10:1.

T.—Ezekiel 19:14; Isaiah 27:11.

W.—Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34, 35.

T.—Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16.

F.—John 15:8; 1 Corinthians 14:25.

S.—1 Peter 2:12; Luke 6: 43, 44.

S.—Matt. 3:10; Luke 3:9; John 15:26.

THE INTRODUCTION

"The Principle of Temperate Living" is designed in setting forth this lesson. Judgment upon sin, in the four sections of the lesson, is set forth from several scripture references. The last section is given under the division: "For Additional Study." Temperate living, in all ages, is the essential thing for all peoples in the carrying out of God's commandments. There are certain regulative laws which God laid down to govern the lives of men. Thus, there is an order of life which is set forth by Christ that is light-giving and preservative for all who will follow its teachings. The student is to note carefully in this lesson Ezekiel's words to God's people in captivity.

I. EZEKIEL FORETELLS THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM (Ezekiel 15:1-6)

In these six verses the prophet Ezekiel compared Jerusalem to the vine-tree. He is declaring here the certain doom of Jerusalem. May we note first, Jerusalem was planted as a choice and noble vine of God's chosen children, wholly a right seed—"How then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" (Jeremiah 2:21). She was planted to bring forth fruit suitable to her character, and to be a name and praise to the glory of God.

But let us study the comparison which the prophet made between her and the vine-tree. **What is the vine-tree more than any tree?** As the vine-tree is not of the wood kind, but weak and dependent upon other trees of the forest for support, it is not fit for man's purpose as building materials, nor for the glory of God. Likewise, Jerusalem, having grown weak and undependable through the years, has become unprofitable unto God. No one can ever make a pin of the vine-tree to hang a vessel upon, for it has no enduring strength; nor can God place

faith in Jerusalem as a strong place of worship unto him. She has become as the vine-tree, unprofitable to God. Since the vine-tree is not good for anything, it is burned for fuel. In like manner, the prophet is saying that the holy city is not fit for real service to God.

Although once an honor to his great name for her holy worship, she has become a degenerate plant, fit only for the fire for fuel. **As the vine-tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem, verse 6.** The prophet is referring to the time when the people of Jerusalem will be cast into the fire of affliction in Babylon. The meaning is that many will be carried into captivity from Jerusalem and Judah because of their transgressions against God. This took place only a few years later. Jerusalem had become, as the weak and useless vine-tree, fit only for the fire of Babylonian captivity. God would suffer her to be devastated by the Babylonian men of war, and her buildings to be burned to ashes. "Note, Those who are not fruitful to the glory of God's grace will be fuel to the fire of his wrath."—**Matthew Henry.**

Remember, Jerusalem and Judah could not renounce God, and become steeped in sin and vile wickedness without paying the penalty. God's judgment is as a consuming fire to those who wilfully disobey his holy will. And what is true of cities and nations, is also true of individuals. As certain doom was pronounced against Jerusalem, because she had become worthless in the sight of God, as the vine-tree, just so everyone will have to face the judgment bar of God, and give an account of his stewardship in this life. The persevering Christian, one who renders a valuable service to God, is as the sturdy tree of the forest, fit for the Builder's Temple. But the weak and sinful person, like the useless vine-tree is fit only for the fire for fuel.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How does the teaching in this topic compare with the great cities and large nations today concerning God's worship? What lesson may the student learn here relative to true Christian service?

II. THE FUNCTION OF TRUE CHRISTIANS (Matthew 5:13-16)

I. To Be Salt:

In the study from these verses, the student is to note that they are a part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. The first teaching to be studied here is in verse 13: **Ye are the salt of the earth.** When Jesus spoke these words to his disciples, what did he mean by this comparison? What teaching did he mean to convey unto them? What is to be the application of this teaching to the Christian today?

The doctrine of the Gospel of Christ is as salt; that is, as salt is applied to unsavory meats to preserve and keep them, so this gospel is to be applied to unsaved souls to save them from eternal destruction. This doctrine of salvation is penetrating, quick and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). As salt penetrates the very center of unsavory meats, so Christ's gospel reaches the depths of the human heart (Acts 2:37). When applied to the human soul, it is the cleansing power of sin; it is relishing, making glad the heart; and it is preserving, blotting out sin and putrefaction from the heart. Note, in the Old Testament an everlasting covenant is called a covenant of salt (Numbers 18:19), and the Gospel is an everlasting covenant, designed to save every soul from eternal destruction. It is the nature of flesh to decay when life ceases. It is likewise the nature of mankind, being in the fallen state under Adam's transgression, to commit sin, and to be eternally lost without obtaining redemption. As God formed in the earth

salt as the element for penetrating and preserving unsavory meat, so he gave to mankind the Gospel of Christ as the means for man's salvation.

Now, Christ's disciples, having learned the doctrine of the gospel, and being employed to teach it to others, were as salt. They were to go forth, seasoned with the gospel, to preach and teach its saving power. As good salt is to the meat, just so they were to be good salt of the gospel, teaching others its saving power. With the salt of grace in their hearts, they were to make this gospel truth savory to others. Their words and affections, actions and relations among others—all were to be seasoned with the grace of the gospel that they might know how to deal with every man (Colossians 4:6). They were to win souls to Christ by presenting his gospel to the people as one applies salt to meat to preserve it from decay. As salt of the gospel, Christ sent them forth to the world to draw dying men to God. Thus, for them to do mission work, they must be scattered, work among people in various places, as salt is spread over meat to preserve it.

This principle may be applied to all Christians today, and especially to ministers of the gospel. They are the salt of the earth; that is to say, they are God's messengers of the saving grace of Christ. They must first have this salt of the gospel applied to their hearts before they can be effective ministers of the Word. In the midst of those with whom they labor in God's kingdom there are those whose souls need saving. As the disciples were the salt of the gospel in their day, so in every age, the servants of God must be the salt of the gospel for them to be able to preach and teach it effectively, and to draw souls to the Lord Jesus.

But if the salt have lost his savour. Note, if the disciple, or any Christian, has lost, out of his heart, the saving grace of the gospel, he has become

worthless as a servant of God. He has become unsavory, void of spiritual life, and thus is good for nothing. He is to be cast out, Jesus would have us to believe. How can he be worth anything to the gospel in the salvation of souls? How can he, who possess not the gospel graces, impart the saving power of the gospel to any effect upon lost souls? Salt is the remedy for unsavory meats, but according to Christ, the disciple who has lost his savour is good for nothing. God cannot use men, whose hearts have turned from him, to be effective messengers to reach lost souls to him. Today we see much ineffective preaching of the gospel. Is it the fact, therefore, that many ministers and other religious leaders are void of this saving grace of the gospel? Have their words become "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal? Have they lost their first love for the gospel? The student will do well to note this point.

2. To Be Lights:

Christ said his disciples were to be lights, teachers and preachers of his gospel light. **Ye are the light of the world**, verse 14. The earth gets its light from the sun. Let us note, the function of sunlight is to remove darkness, and to invigorate life, for without it one would stumble and fall. People would be hopeless and helpless in this world without the sunlight. Just as a city set on a hill cannot be hid, so a candle, a lamp or an electric bulb unhidden sends forth its rays to give light in the house. The gospel light is to the soul as the sun's rays are to the earth: the life black with sin needs the gospel lamp applied to dispel the sin of darkness, as the dark earth must have the sunshine to supply plant and animal life with life-giving properties. So the disciples were to be Christ's messengers of his gospel light. They were not to put it under a bushel, not to bury it as the slothful servant who buried his lord's talent, but they are to let

it shine in the hearts of lost souls. In their gospel ministry, they were to be light-giving messengers of the plan of salvation.

Again, let us make another comparison of the gospel light. As the churches may be considered the candlesticks, the golden candlesticks in which these lights are placed, so the Christian acts of these disciples may be considered the radiance of the gospel light which shines to all that are in the house—to all who will draw themselves unto it and accept the gospel of Christ. The disciples were to shine by their good living as well as by their good preaching. They were not to put the knowledge and light of it under a bushel, but were to spread it. They were to be burning and shining lights (John 5:35). They were to be to others a means of instruction, quickening and comforting by diffusing this gospel light (Job 29:11). The purpose was that others might see their good works and glorify God in heaven.

It is the fact, the glory of God and the salvation of souls is the great thing which Christians today must seek in letting their lights shine in religious work (1 Peter 4:11). The person who has the light of God's gospel in his heart should let it shine in his home, in his church, and in his community for the glory of God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Let a student discuss for the class the work of Christians as "**the salt of the earth.**" Have someone else to discuss the work of Christians as "**the light of the world.**"

III. FALSE PROPHETS IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING (Matthew 7:15-20)

The verses under consideration in this topic are taken from another part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is speaking here of false prophets, the seducers, the wolf in sheep's clothing. Relative to this point, Mark's Gospel gives

in chapter 13, verse 22, the following: "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." Christ was warning his disciples and others gathered about him on the mountain against such false teachers. Is it not true today that there are false teachers who seek to promulgate false doctrines? In Second Peter 2: 1, we have the following words, "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." People should beware of such false teachers and preachers at all times, lest they be led from the correct teaching of the Bible. Remember, Satan turns himself into an angel of light, using his agents to seduce the people (II Cor. 11:13, 14).

Such teachers and preachers shall be known, be found out sooner or later, by their fruits. The trouble is they sow their seeds of false teachings before they are discovered as ravaging wolves. When you look later for the fruits of the Spirit in their teachings, you do not find them. Accordingly, as a corrupt tree, one that is doaty, and cannot bear

good, wholesome fruit, just so the false prophet who goes forth in sheep's clothing cannot produce spiritual fruit in the Master's kingdom. As the tree may look all right from the outward appearance, but powerless within its branches to produce good fruit, so the false teacher, though appearing well before the public, cannot bring forth spiritual fruit in the kingdom of God. The reason is his life does not measure up to the Gospel. Such false teachers and preachers are not capable of bearing the fruit that Christ requires. Sooner or later the fleece falls off, exposing their identity—just who they are—and then the wolf appears plain in all of his malicious and mischievous pretences. His sins have found him out.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why should Christians beware of false teachers? Ask a member of the class to make a study of some of the false prophets and teachers in the Bible and to report before the class, relating briefly their evil deeds.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Paul Giving Divine Instruction by Examples—1 Corinthians 10:6, 7, 14; Numbers 11:4, 33, 34; Psalm 106:14; Exodus 32:6; II Corinthians 6:17; I John 5:21.

LESSON X

JUNE 9, 1940

Ezekiel Teaches Personal Responsibility (Ezekiel 33:7-16)

Golden Text: So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. Romans 14: 12.

PRINTED TEXT: EZEKIEL 33:7-16
(Authorized Version)

7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost

not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do

not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither

shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.

13 When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: Within the period from 586 to 570 B. C.

Place: Babylon.

Persons: Ezekiel and the Exiles in Babylon.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Jeremiah 1:17; 26:2; Acts 5:20.

T.—Acts 13:40, 41, 46; Ezekiel 24:23, 37:11.

W.—II Samuel 14:14; II Peter 3:9.

T.—II Chronicles 7:14.

F.—Ezekiel 3:20; 18:24, 27.

S.—Leviticus 18:5; Numbers 5:6, 7.

S.—Ezekiel 18:22.

THE INTRODUCTION

The student will note that there is very little knowledge obtainable of Ezekiel's personal life. Upon the invasion of the Babylonian men of war, he was carried to Babylon in the reign of Jehoiachin of Judah while Jeremiah was laboring in Jerusalem. It is thought, from the opening words of his prophecy, that he began to prophesy when he was about thirty years of age, and about five years after he was taken to Babylon (592 B. C.).

The class will find in this lesson, which falls in the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, that the captives were warned

of the danger of falling into grievous sins, and that they were held personally responsible to God for the way they lived. In the study of these teachings of God, may the student make personal applications of them to present-day living.

I. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOD'S WATCHMEN (Ezekiel 33:7-9)

Soon after Ezekiel was taken into captivity, along with others from Judah, by the Babylonians, God called him to deliver his prophetic words to the Exiles. He is represented as God's watchman, prophet and preacher, to the captives in the Babylonian kingdom. Let us note, it meant much to the exiles for Ezekiel to be their instructor, preacher and interpreter of God's will toward them. It was helpful to them how Ezekiel instructed them concerning the significance of the exile, how it was brought upon them for Judah's sinfulness, and how it would last for seventy years. While they complained of their hardships, their labors as cap-

tives under the Babylonian kingdom, he urged them to repent of their sins, and to return to God. He assured them that the captivity would cease at the end of seventy years, and that they would be returned to their own land to fulfill their divine mission.

Now, let us turn to the teachings as laid down in verses seven through nine under this topic. What are the truths which God meant for Ezekiel to deliver to the captives? **Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.** God gives Ezekiel the message of warning to the exiles. Remember, it is God who is speaking to inform the captives of the danger of continuing in sin. Using Ezekiel as his spokesman, God desired his children to hear his word. Thus, Ezekiel was to speak the divine message which came from God. As God's prophet among the exiles, Ezekiel had the sacred and solemn duty of giving them proper instruction concerning the way they should live. Note, it has been God's plan through the centuries to raise up prophets and teachers to deliver his messages to his people. It is true, every true follower of Christ, whether he be in the pulpit or in the pew, has the sacred responsibility of imparting the word of God to lost souls. God made it plain that Ezekiel was his true messenger to Israel in exile, and that he was to declare his word unto them.

O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, verse 8. The prophet was to declare this word in the name of the Lord. They were to know they were to die in their sins if they did not repent. He was, thus, to urge them to repent, lest they should be cut off from God without hope of eternal salvation. God had declared it, for "the wages of sin is death." Although he had permitted them to be carried into captivity, God had not forsaken them, but was ready and willing that none should be lost. It is the will of God that the wicked be warned of the danger of

eternal condemnation. God does reveal his wrath from heaven against wicked nations, as well as he does against sinful individuals. These exiles were to have no excuse for being eternally lost. God would see to it that Ezekiel would be his faithful messenger of his word. Sinners are, therefore, warned of the wrath to come that they may flee from it (Matthew 3:7).

Warn them from me. Let them know I love them! Urge them to come back to me. Tell them I will forgive their transgressions, and will remember them no more against them if they will return unto me. The world needs this same warning today. Ministers are to warn sinners of the wrath to come; they are to urge them to repent and believe the gospel; and they should exhort them to live lives of Christian service before the Lord. They should cry out as Isaiah of old, "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him" (Isaiah 3:11). Every student should take this lesson to heart, and resolve to be shining lights for the gospel in their Sunday School and community. In teaching the Word of God, every teacher should stress the need of every member of his Sunday School class being Christians, for the great purpose of knowing the scriptures is the acceptance of its teachings and the living of surrendered lives to God.

Personal application should be made of this teaching principle by the ministers in the pulpit, by the Sunday School teacher in the classroom, and by the lay worker in other Christian services of the church. Repentance of sin and faith in God must be ever stressed in Sunday School teaching, and all religious work. Tender and compassionate feeling for the unregenerated soul should be expressed to win him to accept Christ and live for the Gospel. The scriptures are to be applied, through definite teaching, to sinners today. Hell is as certain as heaven is, and the remedy for sin must be taught

from the Word of God. God would not have Ezekiel to neglect his duty to warn the exiles of the wrath to come, as well as to assure them of their final return to their own land.

Note, **If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity.** God made this plain to Ezekiel. His duty was to give definite warning to the captives. God's word was their opportunity to be saved. Ezekiel was to speak and they were to hear; he was to exhort them and they were to believe. But, if Ezekiel should fail to speak God's word to his people, then God would hold him responsible for the neglect of his duty. **His blood will I require at thine hand.** The apostle Paul said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Corinthians 9:16). The Teacher of the Adult Sunday School Class should feel this important responsibility. Happy is the man who performs his Christian duty in the name of the Lord.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What was Ezekiel's responsibility to the captives in Babylon? What is the minister's responsibility today as God's servant? What is the Sunday School teacher's responsibility to her class?

II. EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE TO THE CAPTIVES (Ezekiel 33:10-16)

If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? verse 10b. These captive Jews complained bitterly over their depressed condition. In fact, they had become mournful over their grievous situation. Note Dr. A. B. Davidson's comment: "Their calamities have stunned and paralyzed the people. They feel lying under an irrevocable doom, entailed upon them by their past history—our sins be upon us, we pine away in them; how, then, shall we live? Nothing is reserved for them but to bear the inex-

haustible penalty of their past evil until, like those in the wilderness, they fall prostrated beneath it."

These people in exile were heavily burdened in spirit and saw no hope for their relief. With the transgressions and sins of their past history upon them, they felt themselves to be in utter despair of God's grace. How shall we then live? Have God's promises and favors been taken from us? Is God just in his warnings and threatenings concerning us? Thus, they thought, may we reason, concerning their situation in Babylon. If this be our condition, there is no remedy. Many men and women today often find themselves in sorrowful plights, as did these captive Jews. They do not know what to do, nor which way to turn to be relieved of their sorrows and grievous burdens. Note, they, like these captives, have brought upon themselves many troubles because of their wrong doings. Israel had forgotten God and was reaping what she had sowed, as today many people are reaping sorrows for their misdeeds, and forgetfulness toward God.

But God sent his prophet to tell these captives that there was yet hope in Israel. God had not forgotten them. **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,** verse 11. God does not take a delight in the death of the wicked. Sinners may destroy themselves by their persistence in sin, but God has no pleasure in their death. On the contrary, God desires the wicked to turn from his evil ways and live the upright life. Ezekiel cried unto them, **Why will ye die, O house of Israel!** There is yet hope; God is willing to receive you; turn to him and live for his glory. The prophet assured them that God would hear their cry. He would forgive the penitent souls. **As I live,** said he, **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.** God had not cut them off, but sent Ezekiel to declare his warnings and promises to them. They must cease complaining, repent of their sins, take

God at his Word, and live. And that is God's answer today to troubled men and women everywhere. As these captive Jews were to take their troubles to the Lord, and let him give them eternal salvation, just so the sorrowing hearts today must go to God for consolation and the blessed assurance of eternal peace through his grace. He is able to bind up their broken hearts, and to give them the joy of his salvation.

Son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression, verse 12a. God commanded Ezekiel to tell the people that, those who had thrown off the profession of religion; that had quit following him; that had grown careless, become carnal, sensual, and worldly, the profession which they had made of religion, and the religious practices which they had for a long time kept, would not save them now. The transgressor cannot depend upon his former righteous deeds to justify him before God in the day of judgment. Past goodness cannot atone for present sins. Are there not righteous people today, who have good hopes of entering heaven, that are in danger of turning to sinful practices by trusting in their past righteous deeds? It is certain, if righteous men forget God, turn to sin and follow the wicked ways of the world, they shall surely perish in their sins. Ezekiel made it plain to the people that former righteousness would avail them nothing, would not atone for present iniquities. Nor could they turn to the goodness and the religious practices of their past lives in Judah and Jerusalem to save them. They must live now the Godly life, free from commitment of new sins to be justified before.

"The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him from the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, in the day of his transgression."—Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. IV.

For the iniquity that he committed, he shall die for it, verse 13b. The wicked person will lose his life by continuing in sin, for God has said, "Thou shalt surely die." On the other hand, God said to the righteous, "Thou shalt surely live." He gave definite warning, through his prophet Ezekiel, to the people of his will toward them. They were to heed his word. The same warning is given today to everyone that they may know God is willing to forgive them if they will turn to him in obedience.

Note again, If he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right, . . . he shall surely live, he shall not die, verse 15b. Note here God's wonderful promise! Here was the assurance of forgiveness; the chance of being absolved of sins; and the privilege of getting right with God. There is enjoined here on the part of the sinner two things; first, turning from his sins; second, doing the lawful and right things. Being obedient unto God and living honest lives with their fellow-men were necessary for them to be justified before the Lord. "Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). By divine grace, many changes have been wrought in the hearts of sinful people, as in the case of Zacchaeus, which have caused them to renounce their sins, and to turn to God with a penitent spirit.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask a member of the class to discuss: **The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression.** Why should a person live close to the Lord day by day? What are God's requirements of transgressors of his law?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: God's just Judgement—Ezekiel 33:17-20; 18:26, 27, 29; Matthew 25:14-31.

LESSON XI

JUNE 16, 1940

Haggai Urges the Building of God's House

(Haggai 1:2-12)

Golden Text: Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. Hebrews 10: 24, 25a.

THE PRINTED TEXT: HAGGAI 1: 2-12

(Authorized Version)

2 Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.

3 Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

5 Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.

6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

7 Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.

8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.

11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high-priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: About 520 B. C.

Place: Jerusalem.

Persons: Haggai, the returned Exiles, and the people of Judah.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Jeremiah 33:10, 12; Lam. 3:40.

T.—Haggai 2:16; Deuteronomy 28:28-40; Hosea 8:7.

W.—Haggai 2:7, 9; Ezekiel 3:7; Psalm 132:13, 14.

T.—Isaiah 40:7; Deut. 28:23, 24.

F.—Joel 1:18-20; Jeremiah 14:2-6.

S.—Malachi 3:9, 11.

S.—Isaiah 1:19; 50:10.

THE INTRODUCTION

In last Sunday's lesson we studied the prophetic words of Ezekiel to the Exiles in Babylon. Today's lesson, falling about 60 years later (520 B. C.), deals with the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. In 538 B. C., Babylon was overthrown. King Cyrus issued a decree in 536 B. C. to allow the captive Jews to return to their home land. He urged the people to return and rebuild the Temple, giving

them the sacred vessels of the Temple that had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar years before. Zerubbabel led about 50,000 people to Jerusalem, and the work on the Temple began. Through the opposition, however, of the enemies, the work was interrupted for several years.

Upon finding the decree of Cyrus, king Darius ordered the work to be resumed. About sixteen years following the return of the Exiles, Haggai, the prophet, appears in the midst of these great interests. Little is known of him, however, apart from the facts given in his prophecy, consisting of two short chapters, and the book of Ezra. He began his labors as a prophet in the second year of King Darius (520 B. C.). Soon afterwards, Zechariah was called to labor with him.

I. HAGGAI REPROVES THE PEOPLE FOR THEIR NEGLECT TO BUILD GOD'S HOUSE (Haggai 1:2-6)

Following Cyrus' decree in 536 B. C., an important body of the captives returned to Jerusalem, and began to rebuild the Temple. But the work was stopped because of opposition when it was barely begun. Thus the Temple lay waste until the second year of the reign of King Darius, 520 B. C.

It seems from the text that the people had become interested chiefly in personal matters, such as building homes and making a living. Let us note the words of the prophet. Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? verse 4. Are you more concerned about good homes to live in than you are about rebuilding the Lord's house for worship? Why did you cease so quickly the work begun on the Temple? Why are you saying, The time is not come, . . . that the Lord's house should be built? Why should you let your enemies foil your purpose? Consider your ways, verse 5. Why is it, Ye have sown much, and bring in little? You have

labored much, but you have harvested little; you have eaten, but have not had enough; you have clothing, but none is warm; and he who labors for wages, puts it into a bag with holes, not getting enough to satisfy his needs? Consider your ways. Know you not why this condition has come upon you? Did not God deliver you from exile for a purpose?

The trouble was this: the Jews were suffering from a prolonged drought in Judah. They were scarcely able, may we think from verse 6, to make a comfortable living, at least for a few years, because of the drought. Haggai called their attention to their calamity and their neglect of duty to rebuild God's house. "He declared that the scarcity from which the Jews were suffering was a reminder from Jehovah to stir them up to consider their ways. Hitherto they had taken too much thought for their own comfort, content to leave the house of Jehovah lying waste. Let them now repair their fault, and Jehovah would bless them once more in their corn and oil and wine."—W. Emery Barnes. "Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in" (Deuteronomy 28:38).

Their sin here was the sin of neglect: allowing themselves to quit God's work at the suggestion and opposition of Satanic influences. Their ready purpose to rebuild the Temple was easily foiled. How prone people are to give up the Lord's work when difficulties arise! Their zeal for Christian service, like these Jews, soon grow cold. Some calamity or misfortune has to befall them, as in the case of the drought upon these Jews, before they will consider seriously their ways. But, as God sent Haggai and Zachariah to call these people to their duty of rebuilding the Temple, and of offering true worship to the Lord, so God in these later days has called his messengers of the Gospel to sound his warning to the people of their forgetfulness of their

duty to worship him in spirit and in truth. Let the student take from the scripture verses given in this topic a lesson for personal considerations. The neglect of the performance of one's Christian duty today is as much an offence to God, as in the days when these Jews turned from their duty to rebuild the Temple for the glory of God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why had these Jews forgotten God's house?

II. GOD'S COMMAND TO BUILD HIS HOUSE Haggai 1:7, 8)

Note again the prophet's words: Consider your ways. Haggai insisted that they take time to reflect over their ways, and how they had forgotten God. "If they had sought first the things of God, these other things would have been provided. They would have had the sanction and favor of Jehovah in whose hands lie the sunshine, the rain and the harvests."—Dr. James R. Kaye, *The Teacher's Guide*. Often selfish ends bring disappointments to people.

Moreover, the prophet added, Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house, verse 8a. All that had been done, when the work was stopped, were the laying of the foundations and the erecting of the altar. They could not serve the Lord in the manner prescribed by the ordinances which God had given Moses until the holy temple was built. Haggai urged them, therefore, to get building materials from the mountains and build the Temple. Go now, do not delay any longer. It is necessary that God's house is to be built. The priests, according to old custom, had a daily service to render in God's house. The high Priest could not function on the day of Atonement before the Ark until the holy of holies was built. Remember, God was not pleased with their delay. Hence, his prophet commanded them to arise and build. God's work is not to be deferred

to some, indefinite date, when the need is in the immediate present.

I will be glorified. Here is the reason for the rebuilding of the Temple. God does get glory from the Christian service of his loyal servants. The Temple was the holy symbol of God's presence among his people. He is glorified in every age, in the holy sanctuaries erected by his faithful ministers, and maintained through the years in holy service and worship to his great name. In fact, the re-establishing of the holy place of worship was a matter of central importance in their religious life. What more could they do, for their own joy of temporal and spiritual blessings, than to build God's house?

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: In what way or ways may Christians build God's house in our present age? What is the penalty for delay to put God's things first?

III. GOD'S INTERPRETATION OF CALAMITIES UPON THE PEOPLE (Haggai 1:9-11)

Verse nine is a repetition of verse six, giving fuller circumstances of the case of the Jews. Note, the dew had been stayed; the earth had been dry and fruitless; and, consequently, the harvests had not been commensurate with their sowing seeds. Haggai tells the people, in verse eleven, that God called for a drought upon the land—upon the mountains, the corn, the wine, the oil, the people, the cattle, and upon all the labors of the hands. Some might have attributed the drought to natural causes over which they had no control, but God explains his act here with unmistakable definiteness. He called for a drought. And why? His word gives the answer.

Why, saith the Lord of hosts. You have neglected to build my house. But you have been careful about your homes; you have bestowed much labor on your

ceiled houses; and you have turned unto your own ways. In all this you looked for much; but, **lo, it came to little.** Why? Because you have forgotten my house.

God visited upon them these calamities to make them reflective, and look for a reason why they were sorely depressed with the drought. Think how often we are much like these Jews in our moral and spiritual blindness, failing to see God's purpose behind his acts. "The state of the world today, and that through which the world has been passing, is to be understood by what is brought out in this scripture—forgetfulness of God, and committed wholly to material things."—**J. R. Kaye.** As God visited the drought upon the Jews to bring them to the realization of their need of him, may we not think he will visit, sooner or later, upon the so-called "Christian people" some calamity to draw them to the sense of their Christian duty? Knowing our duty toward God, let us not neglect to perform, with the talents he has given us, Christian service that will be acceptable unto him.

"God will make us sensible of our necessary and constant dependence upon him, throughout all the links in the chain of second causes, from first to last; so that we can at no time say, 'Now we have no further occasion of God and his providence' (See Hosea 2: 21)."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. IV.**

If we labor for the material comforts of this life only, we shall be in danger of losing our labor; but if we will labor for the meat which endures to eternal life, we can be sure that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord. As the corn, the oil, the new wine perished for the want of rain from heaven, so man's soul, from the lack of spiritual food due to the neglect of God's Word, will die without redemption. Remember, if we will lay up our treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, we shall

provide for ourselves bags that wax not old—it will be a treasure in the heavens that faileth not (Luke 12:33).

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What was God's interpretation of the calamity which had come upon these Jews? What effect did the prophet's preaching have on them? What had these Jews been doing that brought God's wrath upon them? How are we to treat God?

IV. THE RETURN OF THE PEOPLE TO GOD

(Haggai 1: 12-15)

The prophet moved the people, through his divine message from the Lord, to return to God in the way of duty. Haggai's words had profound effect, leading these Jews to see the error of their way and drawing them to their duty of building God's house. **Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jesedech, the high priest, with the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord,** verse 12. They now looked upon Haggai to be the Lord's divine messenger, and now they believed his words to be God's message to them.

When they were made to believe that their sin was the cause of those judgments, the drought and the scarcity of the necessities of life, which God had visited upon them, they feared. Through the words of the prophet, God stirred up their spirits (V. 14). Zerubbabel, who had been the leader in the discontinued work on the foundation of the Temple, was stirred up; Joshua, the high priest, was stirred up by the prophet's words; and the remnant of the people also were moved to arise and build the Temple. Thus they were excited; that is, moved with reverence for God, and possessed of holy fear for his wonderful power. It is worthy of serious thought: a holy fear of God will have a great influence on one's obedience to him. When God sent the earthquake at Philippi and the pris-

on, in which Paul and Silas had been thrust, was shakened and the doors stood ajar, the Philippian jailor came trembling with great fear before God's messengers (Acts 16:29). God's power made manifest, either by visited droughts or earthquakes, or by his preached word, has moved people in different ages to turn and reverence his holy name.

Now, What did these people do when they believed the prophet? **They came and did work in the house of the Lord.** They now "had a mind to work." Without delay they set to work on the Lord's house, each doing according to his capacity or ability. "They did this speedily; it was but on the first day of the sixth month that Haggai preached them this sermon, and by the twenty-fourth of the same month, little more than three weeks, they were all busy working in the house of the Lord their God," verse 15.—**M. Henry.** Being now ashamed of their delay in building God's house and under deep conviction, they became busy in the work, resolving in their hearts to delay no longer. They had lost much time by delay, but now they must redeem the time by speedily pushing forward the work. "It was completed and dedicated in 515 B. C., about twenty years after they had returned from captivity."—**Dr. James R. Kaye.**

As Nehemiah stirred up the people to rebuild the broken down places in the wall about Jerusalem by exhorting them to do their duty, so Haggai brought these negligent Jews to the sense of their duty through his great preaching to establish God's house. It takes strong preaching to move the hardhearted, the selfwilled, and material minded people to

see their responsibility to God. Some are hard to be convinced of God's wrath and his judgments. Like these Jews, they require something more than things of commonplace to convince them of the error of their way. There are others who see the truth of God's word, but are not willing to abide by it. They are willing to go on in their own ways, and to suffer the consequences of God's judgments.

Is this not true with a great many people relative to their soul salvation? They work hard to feed the material man, as was the case of the above Jews, but neglect God and the spiritual man, the most essential thing in life. They are prone to wait, delay their soul salvation, saying, "It is time enough yet"; like these Jews who said, "The time is not come, that the Lord's house should be built." It is true, many are delaying the day of their salvation because of their keen interests in the things of this life, and of their neglectfulness of God's Word. Note, God has said in his word that it is folly to neglect so great salvation.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why was it necessary for God to send his prophet to speak to the people? Why are some people so hardhearted today, and following in their own ways? Should ministers, as Haggai of old, preach today God's word in all of its power and meaning?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Haggai's Second Message of Encouragement with a Promise of Future Glory.—Haggai 2:1-9; Psalm 85:8, 9; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Ezekiel 2:5; 8:9; Ezekiel 29:45, 46.

LESSON XII

JUNE 23, 1940

Malachi Demands Honesty Toward God

Malachi 3:7-18

Golden Text: Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that they may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Malachi 3: 10.

PRINTED TEXT: MALACHI 3:7-18*(Authorized Version)*

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?

14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

16 Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: About 445-432 B. C.

Place: Jerusalem.

Persons: Malachi's prophesying was to the Israelites in general.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Zechariah 1:3; Acts 7:51; Nehemiah 13:10-12.

T.—II Kings 7:2; I Chronicles 26:20; II Chronicles 31:10; Nehemiah 10:38.

W.—Joel 1:4; 2:25; Amos 4:9.

T.—Isaiah 61:9; 62:4; Daniel 8:9.

F.—Malachi 1:7, 12, 13; 2:17.

S.—Isaiah 58:3; Zephaniah 1:12.

S.—Psalm 95: 9; Jeremiah 7:10.

THE INTRODUCTION

Malachi prophesied to Israel about seventy-five years following that given by

Haggai in our last lesson. Nothing of the personal history is known of him. The name signifies **messenger**. He was the last of the prophets of the Old Testament, and is classed as one of the "Minor Prophets." Many Bible scholars place him as contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah.

The main theme of this lesson is the prophet's plea for honesty toward God. The student may note that much of the thought in the lesson text is often used by ministers in sermons. The class should find this scripture a most interesting study. May the teacher, in the presentation of the material given in the lesson, together with the information gathered by her from other sources, seek to impress this theme of honesty toward God upon every member of the class.

I. THE SIN OF FORSAKING AND ROBBERY (Malachi 3:7-9)

Our last season closed with the people of Judah and Jerusalem setting themselves to work on rebuilding the Temple. There was an intervening period of around seventy-five years, or more, from the time Haggai delivered his prophecy to this of Malachi in this lesson.

Ye are gone from mine ordinances, and have not kept them, v. 7. God's controversy here with his people is concerning their deserting his ordinances, and becoming corrupt in their conduct. They had become careless of observing the true worship of God. In fact, they had revolted from God, not only in failing to offer true worship, but also in their conversation and manner of evil conduct. Malachi declared that they had been guilty of wilful disobedience to God, **even from the days of your fathers**. It was not a recent transgression, but one covering a period of several years. It refers, may we believe, to either the days of their fathers who were carried into

captivity, or to the generations of the more recent past; that is, they had fallen off from God's worship from what they were when they first returned from captivity. Or, it may refer to both periods of time mentioned here. At least they had fallen off since the days when Haggai prophesied to them. In this connection we read, in Ezra 9:7, "Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day." They needed to be rebuked and God condemned them for their disobedience in turning away from the observance of his ordinances. It is no less true today that multitudes of people have forsaken God, and need sharp rebuke, from God's true messengers, for their sins. God's word must be taught and preached with conviction and power to bring people to see their duty to God.

Return unto me and I will return unto you. You have forsaken me! You have thrown down my ordinances. You have cast off my worship. You are guilty of vile disobedience. You are standing in sin and are condemned. Return, therefore, to me. Come back, thou backsliding Israel, to your first love. Make amends of your transgressions. Then I will return unto you. I will take you back. I will recognize you as my people. You have taken foreign wives, and have divorced your lawful wives. You have turned to the worship of idols. Your priests are also guilty of these sinful practices. Return unto me, and I will return unto you. This was a great invitation for them to return. A reconciliation between them and God was the necessary thing to be done. And it is evident that the world today needs to be reconciled to God.

Now note their peevish answer. See the emptiness of their words! **Wherein shall we return? v. 7b.** May we note one Bible scholar's thought here: "But you said with disdain, said it to the prophets that called you, said it to one another,

said it to your own hearts, to stifle the convictions you were under, **Wherein shall we return?**" What have we done amiss? Such a question was a challenge to the prophet to give some specific instance of their disloyalty to God. It was an ill attitude for them to count the just reproofs of the prophet as bitter reproaches. But their attitude of offense brought the prophet's specific condemnation against them.

Will a man rob God? Yes, you have robbed him. Wherein have we robbed him? You have robbed him in **tithes and offerings**. This whole nation has robbed him. Note, the prophet brought them face to face with their sin. Moreover, said he, **Ye are cursed with a curse**. They had broken the eighth commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." Thus, they had brought God's judgment against them. The whole nation was guilty. They had failed to give God the tenth part of their increase, as was required by the old law. They had failed to give him their offerings of the best of the land. Hence, Malachi told them that they had sadly failed in these things, when God had blessed them in their harvests.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What are God's rightful claims upon us? What do we owe him? Why do people neglect to meet these claims of God today?

II. THE PROPHET'S CALL TO DUTY (Malachi 3:10-12)

The prophet called the Israelites to their duty, and promised them the divine protection (vs. 10:12). He urged them to do their duty by saying, **Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse**. Do your whole duty by returning to him that which belongs to him. "They had brought some; but, like Ananias and Sapphira, had kept back part of the price."—M. Henry. You are to bring in the full tithes to the utmost, all that the law requires, that there may be meat in God's

house for those who serve at the altar. Note, God must be served first. The support of his righteous work must not be neglected. Because they were guilty of failing to perform this important duty, the prophet commanded them to attend to it without delay. Let God be served first, and then prove me now herewith, **saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing**, v. 10b. This is the assurance of God's blessing. They were first to do this work and trust God; try him for the reward, and see his blessings fall upon them for the performance of their duty. Remember the story of the prophet Elijah, "Make me thereof a little cake first"; then prove me to see if there shall not be enough afterwards "for thee and for thy son" (I Kings 17:13). These Israelites were, like this woman, to have faith in the prophet's words. Accordingly, the prophet challenged them to do their duty, and trust God for their blessings. Are we not to do the same today? Think how, many people, by their sins, keep closed the windows of heaven! This is true of material as well as of spiritual things. God is anxiously waiting to bestow both types of blessings upon us if we will do our duty toward him.

Note the divine providence, **I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes**, v. 11a. When you have done your duty, you shall be blessed, and the pestilences shall be rebuked. The responsibility of duty, well performed, was the first essential. The reward was to follow obedience. God never fails to pay royal dividends for just services rendered to him.

The student will remember, in previous lessons, how in Hezekiah's day Jerusalem was threatened by the overwhelming Assyrian army, but God thrust back the 185,000 invaders with a "blast," because Hezekiah's heart was right with God; and also how God removed the great drought when the Israelites returned to rebuild the Temple. And here,

almost a century later, God assured these Jews, who had backslidden, his divine protection if they would return to him. He is a patient and merciful God. Why do people turn from him and neglect his ordinances? The flesh is weak and the temptations are great, it is true, but what does it profit a man to walk in the ways of Satan?

All nations shall call you blessed, v. 12. Why? They will see your good works. Yours shall be a **delightsome land**. It will be then in a state of peace and plenty; a land flowing with milk and honey, for God has promised to bless it. When you have returned, have paid your tithes and offerings according to God's plan, then you shall be blessed. The nations about you, seeing your goodness toward God and his promises granted unto you, shall call you blessed. Is it not true that God wants the nations today to turn to him, pay their tithes and offerings, and live in holy obedience unto him? Seeing the devastation and the suffering which wars are inflicting in the earth today, it is certainly true of some nations that neither God nor man can call them blessed. As God caused the prophet Malachi to speak to the Israelites of their duty, just so today the messengers of his Word need to teach and preach, in definite terms, the true teachings of God's will toward mankind. Sinful man, whether Jew or Gentile, must turn to God, as individuals, and as nations, if they would be the recipients of his manifold blessings.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Upon what condition was God's blessings promised? How did God promise to protect them? On what conditions would the nations call them blessed?

III. ISRAEL'S FALSE ATTITUDES TOWARD GOD (Malachi 3:13-15)

These verses express the false attitudes which these Jews had toward God.

God took notice of the blasphemous talk of these sinners. He resented their impudent speech. They were treasonable words directed against the King of kings to stir up atheism and greater disregard for Jehovah. **Your words have been stout against me, v. 13a.** You have been talking against me, like your forefathers in the wilderness (Ps. 78: 19). You have been opposing my divine will and way toward you. You are standing in your own light. Your words have been stout, arising from your pride, haughtiness and contempt for me. The prophet told them that their words had been stout against God; that they had spoken boldly, not at all ashamed, by expressing their minds aloud; and thus they had designed to propagate their atheistical notions against their God. By such means they had stirred up the minds of other people against the heavenly Father. Is it not the fact that there are still traces of such attitudes manifested today among some people in every land?

Again, the prophet reminds them of their blasphemous words thus: **Ye have said, It is vain to serve God, v. 14a.** In such words, you are declaring that he who serves God does it to no purpose. His labor is in vain. You are considering religious worship to Almighty God of no profit, no value to the individual or to society. Let us think what an unjust and unreasonable reflection imposed upon religious worship! Note what slander against the heavenly Father! They had said, **What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances? What wealth have we gained from observing these ordinances?** These Jews were looking on the side of material good instead of considering the spiritual values to their souls; and no wonder, when the emptiness of their worship revealed the truth of mere outward form, or show of religion.

With similar attitudes, some people today are asking the question: Why go to church anyway? What good does one

derive from it? And why spend so much money and time on spreading the Gospel? Such people, like these Jews, are thinking in terms of the material and not of the spiritual life. Accordingly, they are thinking and laboring to feed the body for comfort and pleasure, and are wilfully neglecting the more important thing—feeding the soul with the bread of life.

Note again, these Jews claimed that the proud were happy. **Yea, They that work wickedness are set up, v. 15a.** Here, they claimed that the workers of wickedness were set up in the world. They had prospered, and were recognized by the people. But note what the prophet told them, “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.... When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them” (Mal. 2: 17). You have blasphemed against him. It displeased God for you to make such statements against his holy name. It displeases God today for people to make such claims against him.

These Jews had been saying also, **they that tempt God are even delivered, v. 15b.** They are delivered, and “where is the God of judgment?” (Mal. 2: 17b). Those

that tempt the Lord with their wicked ways, say they, are **even delivered.** Why strive, then, to serve the Lord? What does it profit a man to be religious when those who work wickedness are **even delivered?** “Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world (being always at ease); they increase in riches” (Ps. 73: 12). Such is the argument today of the worldly minded people. They are simply materialists. “The man who serves the Lord to realize a ‘profit,’ a material gain, the man to whom God means no more than that, is not serving the Lord, and there is, therefore, no ‘profit’ due him. He will soon discontinue this empty thing he calls ‘service.’”—Dr. James R. Kaye.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Does God exalt the proud and the wicked, as these Jews intimated? Why did they say it is vain to serve God? What is the contention of some people today relative to the church and its work?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: God Remembering His People.—Mal. 3: 16-18; Ps. 65: 6; He. 3: 13; Rev. 20: 12; Isa. 62: 3; Tit. 2: 14; I Pet. 2: 9; Am. 5: 15.

LESSON XIII

JUNE 30, 1940

Jonah: The Outreach of God's Love (Jonah 3:1-10; 4:10, 11)

Golden Text: Salvation is of the Lord. Jonah 2:9.

THE PRINTED TEXT: JONAH 3: 1-10; 4: 10, 11
(Authorized Version)

1 And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.

Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey; and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on

sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed, nor drink water.

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

9 Who can tell if God will turn and

repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

* * *

10 Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night:

11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: It is uncertain, but it is believed that the events referred to in the book of Jonah occurred about 780 B. C.

Place: The city of Nineveh, located on the east bank of the upper Tigris River.

Persons: Jonah and the people of Nineveh.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 12:41; Lu. 11:32.

T.—Esther 4:1-4; Jer. 6:26.

W.—Eze. 27:30, 31; Dan. 9:3.

T.—II Chron. 20:3; Ez. 8:21.

F.—II Sam. 12:22; Joel 2:14.

S.—I Kings 21:27-29.

S.—Amos 7:3, 6.

THE INTRODUCTION

Jonah was the son of Amittai. He was a native of Gath-hepher in the tribe of Zebulun. Aside the facts of his prophecy, all we know of him is given in II Kings 14: 25. In this passage he assured Jeroboam II of Israel that he would be victorious over the Syrians.

He prophesied for the northern kingdom, and was, probably, the first of the prophets. He was commissioned to go to Nineveh and to declare that God would overthrow it in forty days because of its wickedness unless it repent. Since the book is short, having only four chapters of forty-eight verses in all, the student would do well to read the whole book in

connection with the lesson for a clear understanding of what it contains.

I. JONAH'S MESSAGE TO NINEVEH (Jonah 3: 1-4)

Before studying this topic, the student should read carefully chapters one and two of this book, noting God's commission and Jonah's disobedience. The events in these two chapters should be well in hand before the student begins the study of this topic. When a sufficient understanding has been acquired of these preceding facts, then turn to the study of the following discussion.

God recommissioned Jonah to go to Nineveh. He meant for Jonah to perform the task which he first commanded him to do. The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, . . . and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee, verses 1, 2. This was a divine commission which God gave Jonah. He was to preach repentance to these Gentiles, for God desired them to know his will toward them. Let us note here that Jonah

may be considered the first foreign missionary of the Bible. God desired that these Gentile people should know his great concern about their salvation.

Nineveh, the leading city of the world of that day, is described in the book of Jonah as an "exceeding great city." Chapter four, verse eleven states that it was a "great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand." It was a city of three days' journey. God told Jonah to "cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me" (Ch. 1: 2b). Jonah obeyed God this time, and went according to the word of the Lord. He entered into the city a day's journey, and cried unto the people, saying, **Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.** According to God's word, you have only forty days to repent of your wickedness and turn to him. He has sent me as his divine messenger to declare his word unto you. You are to take him at his word and repent of your sins. Let us believe that Jonah preached in all earnestness God's word, and assured the people that God's wrath would be visited upon them if they did not repent. Remember, God gave them sufficient time to hear his prophet's message. Jonah's preaching of God's warning and impending judgment would inform the people in time that the whole city might hear his message in forty days. Thus, God's word was directed to that great city of around half million people. Jonah's commission to preach to so great a people, steeped in vile wickedness and pagan worship, was a great task, but God was with him and gave him the message which the people needed to hear. God has promised to be with his divine messengers in every land, and to lead them by his holy word. He never makes the task too great for the one whom he calls to fill that task. As he was with Moses in the wilderness and

Joshua in Canaan, so he was with Jonah in that wicked city.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did God send Jonah to preach to the Gentiles in Nineveh? Ask a member of the class to discuss the significance of the revival preaching of Jonah for forty days to a city of half million people. What do you think of the Spirit of God behind Jonah's preaching?

II. THE REPENTANCE OF NINEVEH (Jonah 3: 5-9)

The people of Nineveh believed God, verse 5a. Jonah's preaching had produced the desired results which God had sought for the great city. They were moved with a great conviction that back of the prophet's preaching was divine authority. They were moved that God had spoken his words of warning to them, and that he would fulfill the prediction unless they repent. Note, they believed God's word. That is what we are to do. That is the vital thing. Men and women today need to observe this lesson from Nineveh, and to believe God's holy ministers.

And the tidings reached the king, verse 6a. The people had heard and believed God's prophet, and were ready to take the word to their king. The messengers made known to him the preaching of the prophet, emphasizing, let us believe, the truths concerning the city's doom unless she repent. The king was moved to believe the words brought to him. "He set the example for his people by becoming one of them in laying aside his regal garments, covering himself with sackcloth, and sitting in ashes."—**Dr. James R. Kaye.** He was ready to humble himself and to seek forgiveness before the Lord, thus leading his people to put on sackcloth and ashes.

Sackcloth: "It was a dark cloth made of goat's hair (Isa. 50: 3; Rev. 6: 12). It was worn by mourners (II Sam. 3: 31)

and often by prophets (Isa. 20: 2). It had the appearance of a sack and was usually worn over other garments (John 3: 6), and sometimes underneath (I Kg. 21: 27). It was also used as sacks (Gen. 42: 25; Josh. 9: 4). It was used as dress by the poor. Ashes were thrown on the head as expressive of grief. Hence the expression, repenting in sackcloth and ashes."—Dr. James R. Kaye.

The king issued a decree which extended to every man and beast. Let **neither man, nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing.** Thus the king proclaimed a fast for everyone in the city. Nothing should be left undone, and no one should be prevented from seeking penitence before God. The city must be saved from God's impending judgment. Note the thoroughgoing and the purposeful expression of humility and repentance shown here on the part of the king of Nineveh. Let everyone cry **mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way.** This was a proclamation, decreed by the king, sent to all of the people in the city. They were to heed his decree, and to seek forgiveness of their sins before the Lord. God had called them to repentance. If his judgment was to be diverted, the people must speedily turn from their sins. A definite time was given them to repent. Remember it was Jonah's preaching, through the power of God, that convicted them of their sinful state. All had sinned and come short of the glory of God. This they soon recognized by the prophet's holy message, and they were conscious of their lost condition. They had only forty days to get right with God.

Who can tell if God will turn and repent? Let us put on sackcloth and ashes. Let us humble ourselves before the Lord. Let us seek his mercy and forgiveness. May he, then, withhold from us the judgment pronounced against us. May he have pity on us and turn his wrath from us. Let us try God and see if he

will change his mind toward us. Note the submissive spirit which these Ninevites showed, and the trust which they were willing to place in God. This is an object lesson for us today, as well as it was designed as an object lesson for the Israelites. Note here, one call of God to a pagan city, full of idolatrous worship and steeped in vile wickedness, brought the people to their knees through the preaching of one man. Jonah, a prophet of Israel and a stranger to the Ninevites, was used to stir those pagan people to a deep sense of sinfulness and the need of repentance. But Israel, the covenant people of God, remained through the years obdurate, and did not respond to every call of God. Years later the Assyrians were divinely employed to bring Israel under judgment by bringing the kingdom to an end, and carrying the best part of the people into captivity (722 B. C.).

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: When the people believed Jonah's preaching, why did they tell the king? Let a member of the class tell what the king did. What is meant by "putting on sackcloth and ashes"? Was the hope of these Ninevites based upon repentance? What is our hope based upon?

III. GOD'S MERCIFUL DEALINGS WITH PENITENT PEOPLE (Jonah 3: 10; 4: 10, 11)

The renunciation of sin is one of the basic elements of repentance. God saw how the Ninevites **turned from their evil way.** Jonah's preaching had born the spiritual fruit which God desired. Does it not bring to mind the message of John the Baptist? "Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance." Jonah had performed his mission and the objective was achieved in the name of the Lord. What if ministers today could obtain such results? Would there not be witnessed a great revival in some of the great cities?

Think how the people would be humbled before the Lord!

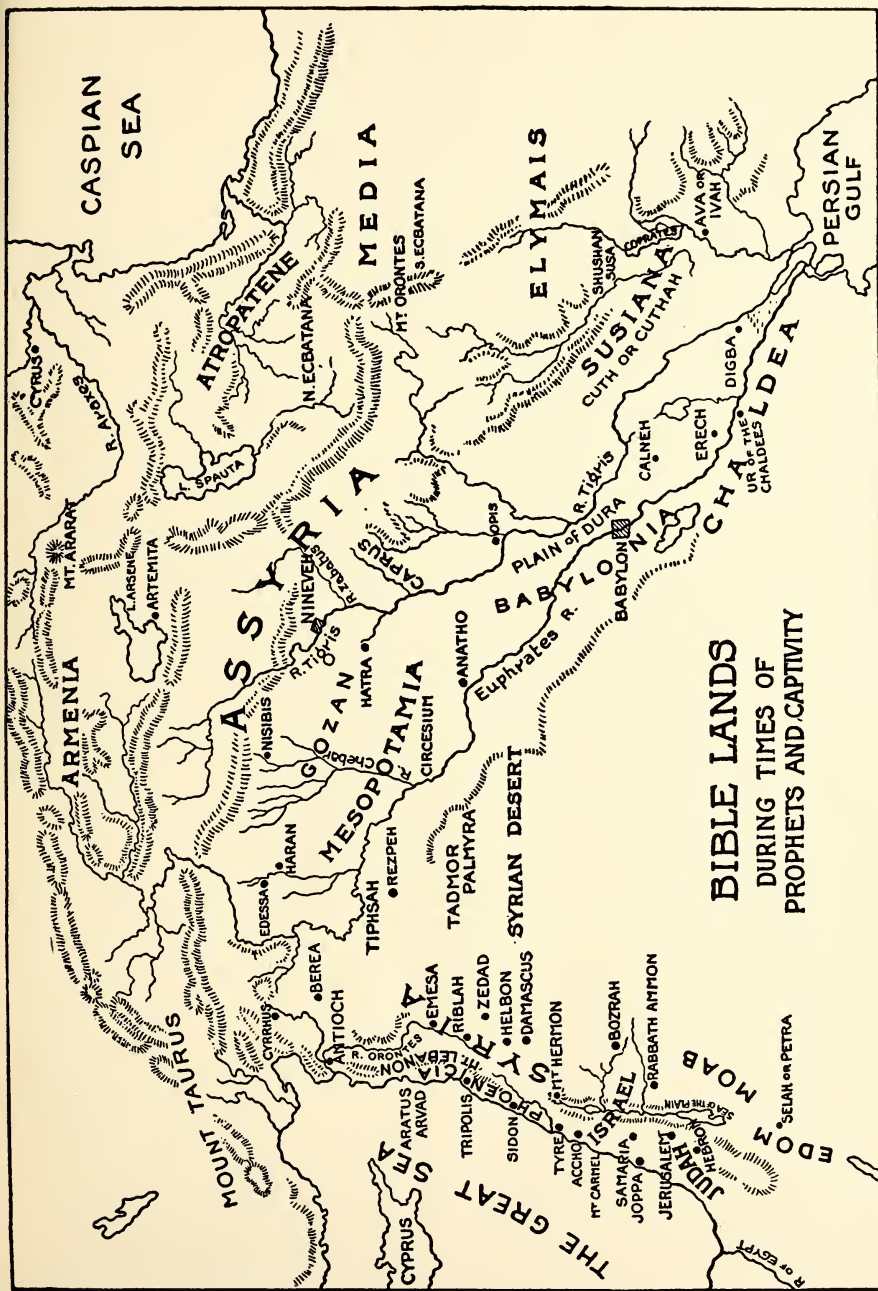
God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not, verse 10. Since these Gentiles in Nineveh had repented of their iniquities, God was reconciled unto them, and removed the impending judgment which he had formerly declared would be visited upon them. The disobedient child who amends his ways is spared the punishment of a loving father. We are not to understand that God was to afflict by "the evil," in the sense we do evil. It was a judgment, a penalty, as declared by the proclamation; that is, God would suffer them to be overthrown at the end of the forty days' period unless they repent. Since they had turned to God, in obedience to the prophet's word, the prediction of Jonah would not be fulfilled. They had met the condition, therefore, the penalty was removed. Had they not repented, on the other hand, they would have been overthrown according to God's word. The alternative was: repent and be saved, or go on in their wickedness and be overthrown. They were to believe, or to reject God's word, and thus receive the consequences. But, when they had entered into true relationship with God, the predicted judgment was removed. If they had, on the other hand, remained obdurate and disobedient to God's call, then the prediction of the prophet would have been fulfilled to the letter. God has provided a way of escape for everyone who will heed his holy word. As in the case of these Ninevites, just so people are to accept God's promises and live, or they

may, by their own volition, reject his pleadings and die in their sins. The decision of these Ninevites serves as an object lesson for everyone who will be guided by their example.

Remember, in the case of the judgment of fire which God had declared he would send against Israel, in the days of her great transgression, how through the prayer of the prophet Amos, the judgment was averted (Amos 7: 4-6). Note in Jeremiah's prophecy God's power in the disposition of the nations: "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil way, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto it" (Jer. 18: 8). The nations today, those that are forgetful of God and that seek to do wickedness against those around them, are as the people of Nineveh were before Jonah led them to repentance. Repentance is a personal matter, but a great city, or a great nation is affected when preaching like Jonah's can move thousands to put on sackcloth and ashes. We are reminded of the day of Pentecost when three thousand souls in the city of Jerusalem repented upon the preaching of the apostle Peter. The Spirit of God was with these men, and great confessions were made unto the Lord.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is meant by the expression "God repented of the evil"? How may people avert God's judgments today? When is punishment justified?

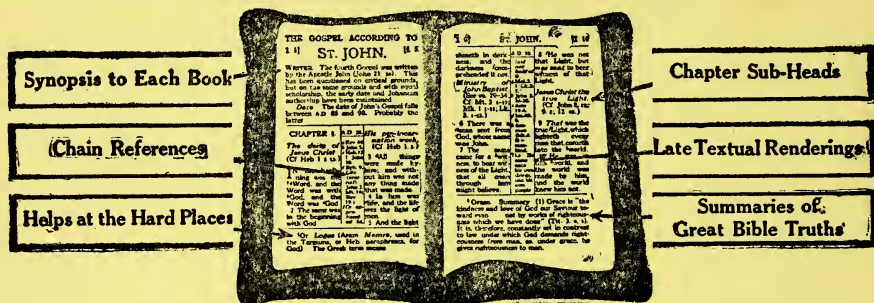
FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: God's Reproof of Jonah's Complaint.—Jonah 4: 1-11; Exodus 34: 6; Ps. 86: 5; Joel 2: 13; Matthew 20: 11, 15; Deuteronomy 1: 39.



The Scofield Reference Bible

Edited by Rev. C. I. SCOFIELD, D.D.

Compare your Bibles with it. See if any of them have these helpful features: Chain-references of great Bible doctrines—Summaries of great Bible truths—Synopsis to each book of the Bible—Prophecies harmonized—Apparent contradictions reconciled—Revised marginal references—Bible types explained—The greater covenants analyzed.



HANDY SIZE EDITION

Specimen of Type

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

Size 7x4½ inches and only 1½ inches in thickness.

LARGE TYPE EDITION

Specimen of Type

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

Size 8½x5½ inches and only 1½ inches in thickness.

NOTE—All have overlapping covers, round corners, and red under gold edges, except as noted.

No. 40. Fine Grain Cloth, round corners, red edges. **\$1.95**

No. 53. French Morocco Leather **\$5.50**

"Oxford India Paper" Edition

Fits the Pocket

Size 7x4½ inches and only 1 inch thick.

No. 53x. French Morocco Leather **\$7.00**

No. 55x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$8.00**

No. 59x. Persian Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$9.00**

With Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names, Subject, Index, Concordance and Maps. (1½ inches thick.)

No. 153. French Morocco Leather, (white paper edition, 1½ inches thick) **\$6.50**

No. 155x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$9.50**

No. 165x. Real Morocco Leather, calf lined to edge, silk sewed **\$12.00**

No. 90. Fine Grain Cloth, round corners, red edges. **\$2.75**

No. 73. French Morocco Leather **\$6.50**

"Oxford India Paper" Edition

Size 8½x5½ inches and only 1 inch thick.

No. 73x. French Morocco Leather **\$9.00**

No. 75x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$10.00**

No. 79x. Persian Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$11.50**

With Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names, Subject, Index, Concordance and Maps. (1½ inches thick.)

No. 173. French Morocco Leather, (white paper edition, 1½ inches thick) **\$7.50**

No. 175x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$11.50**

No. 185x. Real Morocco Leather, calf lined to edge, silk sewed **\$14.75**



A
BIBLE
AND A
COMMENTARY
COMBINED

Improved thumb index
at 50c extra.

Cp 286.2
SEP 23 1940

U. N. C.
CAROLINA ROOM

The Advanced Quarterly

For Use By

ADULT

and

YOUNG

PEOPLE'S

Classes



PUBLISHED BY
Free Will Baptist Press
AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

THE ADVANCED QUARTERLY

for

Young People and Adults

REV. R. B. SPENCER -----Editor

Volume I Fourth Quarter, 1940 Number 4

October-November-December

CONTENTS

	Page
1. October 6: Luke and His Gospel -----	3
2. October 13: The Boyhood of Jesus -----	6
3. October 20: The Message of John the Baptist -----	10
4. October 27: Christian Motives for Abstinence -----	15
5. November 3: Jesus Declares His Mission -----	19
6. November 10: The Golden Rule -----	24
7. November 17: Jesus' Concern for Life and Health -----	28
8. November 24: Attitudes towards the Gospel Message -----	33
9. December 1: An Exacting Discipleship -----	39
10. December 8: A Good Neighbor -----	44
11. December 15: Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray -----	48
12. December 22: Sharing the Shepherds' Joy -----	53
13. December 29: Jesus Requires Faithfulness -----	57

Published Quarterly by the Free Will Baptist Press, Ayden, North Carolina.

Price 8 cents per copy ----- 32 cents per year

Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office, Ayden, North Carolina,
under the Act of March 3, 1879.

FOREWORD

The aim of the Educational Committee, in the selection of the subjects for the Fourth Quarter, has been stated thus: "To discover through the Gospel of Luke the warm sympathy of Jesus and his regard for the earthly welfare and the eternal salvation of men, and to cultivate similar attitudes." In view of this aim, the scripture texts for the lessons have been chosen from different chapters of Luke's Gospel which contain the teachings bearing upon the aim as set forth by the Educational Committee.

To the Teacher

The writer of the lessons for the Fourth Quarter has kept constantly in mind two main things; namely, (1) the essential principles or truths to be brought out in each lesson development; (2) the simple or straight-forward way in which the principles or truths should be laid down for study. It has been his aim to confine the lesson development to the scripture texts, and to the principles underlying the spiritual truths as laid down by the Gospel of St. Luke and other parallel scriptures. Each lesson has been treated topically, with thought and discussional questions coming at the end. This has been done with the hope that the teacher will encourage valuable discussion or comment.

To the Student

The writer has tried to keep in mind the student of average ability in the Adult and Young People's classes, and has proceeded with the view of writing each lesson in such a way as to make the points of teaching perfectly clear. Consequently, it is his belief that the average student will have no difficulty in obtaining a good knowledge of each lesson upon a careful study of the same. The scripture references are given to aid the student in acquiring a fuller knowledge of the lesson text. The questions given at the end of each topic are for discussion and answer bearing upon the thought under consideration. No student can hope to get the best results from the use of this Adult Class quarterly unless he makes a careful study each week of the lesson in hand.

R. B. SPENCER

Luke and His Gospel

(Luke 1: 1-4; Acts 1: 1; Col. 4: 14; II Tim. 4: 11)

Golden Text: It seemed good to me also . . . to write . . . that thou mightest know the certainty of the things wherein thou wast instructed. Luke 1: 3, 4.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(*Authorized Version*)

Luke 1:

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the cer-

tainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

Acts 1:

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.

Colossians 4:

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

2 Timothy 4:

11 Only Luke is with me.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 30; 62-63; 68.

Place: Jerusalem.

Persons: Saint Luke, Theophilus and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mk. 1: 1; Jo. 15: 27; He. 2: 3.

T.—I Pet 5: 1; I Jo. 1: 1.

W.—Ac. 1: 1; 11: 4; 15: 19, 25, 28.

T.—I Cor. 14: 40.

F.—Lu. 1: 3; 3: 23.

S.—II Tim. 4: 10.

S.—Phile. 1: 24.

THE INTRODUCTION

Saint Luke was of Greek origin and doubtless a native of Antioch in Syria. He was a physician (Col. 4: 14). His splendid Greek culture, coupled with the divine call, fitted him in a special way to write his Gospel to the Greeks. He addressed it to "most excellent Theophilus," who was "a Gentile of rank and consideration."

His style of writing is "that of an educated man," and more classical than that of the other Gospel writers. He groups his details "in order," but the order is that of grouping the details. He carries forward each series of events to the end before taking up the next. He uses some details which are not found in the other three Gospels. The time of his Gospel is placed about 63 A. D., and before the Book of Acts of which he is also the author.

I. SAINT LUKE'S AIM FOR WRITING HIS GOSPEL

(Luk. 1: 1-4)

He said, It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first to write, verse 3a. Saint Luke was led by the Holy

Spirit to write his Gospel. He claims to have had "perfect understanding." He said, "eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word" had delivered unto "us" (him) "those things which are most surely believed." This is a reference to the Lord's disciples and doubtless others who had related the teachings of Christ to him. The writers of the Scriptures "wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

In addressing his Gospel to Theophilus, Saint Luke had in mind a definite purpose. He said, **That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed**, verse 4. The instructions which Luke has reference to were "the things of Christ and Christian truth." Therefore, Luke had in mind the tracing of these things "which are most surely believed." All four Gospel writers wrote from divine inspiration, and had definite classes of people in mind to whom their Gospels were intended. Matthew wrote for the Jews; Mark, for the Romans; Luke, for the Greeks; and John, for the Church. From the very beginning of his Gospel, Saint Luke, traced "the course of all things from the very first."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How may a good education better enable a person to write down his thoughts? Was Saint Luke's classical education an advantage or a hindrance to him in his writing his Gospel? Give your reasons.

II. SAINT LUKE THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

(Acts 1: 1)

The first verse in the Book of Acts establishes the authorship of this book. Note, it is addressed to the same person, Theophilus. Luke said, **The former treatise have I made . . . of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.** He was referring here to his Gospel without any doubt. He is telling Theophilus here that in that treatise he had set forth the

teachings of Jesus. Remember, in the very beginning of the Gospel, he declared that he was to do that very thing. There was the divine power behind him in the purpose of his writing the Third Gospel.

Let us note here that the Book of Acts is the continuation of the historical narrative of Luke's Gospel. In his Gospel he confines his thought to the acts and teachings of Christ, but in Acts he narrates the acts of the Apostles. In it he gives the last acts of our Lord, the account of his ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. His method is that of the narrative—telling "in order" events closely related one to the other. Many of his expressions of medical terms in both books readily identify him as Luke the physician. From an educational point of view he was well qualified to write in a fine way the historical narrative of the Apostles. One is to remember that Saint Luke is the only Gentile writer of the Scriptures. Members of the Adult Class quarterly should not find his writings in either book of much difficulty to understand.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask the members of the class to search Bible references for further knowledge of "Theophilus." How do we know Saint Luke wrote his Gospel before he wrote the Book of Acts?

III. SAINT LUKE WITH SAINT PAUL IN ROME

(Col. 4: 14; II Tim. 4: 11)

Luke, together with Silas and Timothy was with the apostle Paul on his Second Missionary journey. We learn in Colossians 4: 14 that Paul called him "the beloved physician." Some time later when Paul was taken from Caesarea to Rome for trial, Luke went with him. In this connection we note that Paul wrote his letter to the Colossian church while he

was in Rome. Upon his sending the letter to the Colossian brethren, he sent the greetings of Luke, which indicate that Luke was with Paul at that time. We note again that Paul wrote his letter to Philemon while he was in Rome. In this letter to Philemon, who at that time was at Colosse, a city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, Paul said in verses twenty-three and twenty-four that Marcus (Mark), Aristarchus, Demus, and Lucas (Luke), my fellowlaborers salute thee. This shows that Saint Luke and these other brethren were with Paul in Rome. May we observe further that Luke was not only Paul's companion, but also he was "the beloved physician" and an evangelist as well.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he wrote concerning Luke being still with him. This was after Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. He stated in this letter, chapter four, verses ten and eleven, that Demus had gone to Thesalonica; Crescens, to Galatia; Titus, to Dalmatia; and that "only Luke is with me." Thus it seems that all others had left him. Dr. James R. Kaye comments thus on this point: "He feels the loneliness of his position, and knows, as he tells Timothy, that the hour of his departure is at hand."

During Paul's second imprisonment in Rome, a great fire broke out in the city and consumed a large part of it. The emperor Nero laid the blame on the Christians; and therefore instituted a horrible persecution against them. Moreover, Paul was placed in prison in Rome the second time. It was from his prison-cell that he wrote his last epistle—the Second Epistle to Timothy. Concerning Saint Luke's age and death there is the

utmost uncertainty. "He probably died a martyr, between A. D. 75 and A. D. 100."—*Bible Dictionary* by Dr. William Smith, LL. D.

"This lesson has brought to us the writer of the Third Gospel, the study of which will be conducted through this fourth quarter. We know the author and also the design of his Gospel, the people for whom it was written, and the manner in which it was adapted to their characteristics."—J. R. Kaye, *The Teacher's Guide*.

For the person who is interested in a careful study of St. Luke's writings, it will be well for him to study the life of Luke by some good author. Also he should make an extensive study of the Gospel of St. Luke and the book of The Acts of the Apostles. St. Luke's way of relating events is interesting, direct and to the point. Since the study of the Gospel of St. Luke runs through this quarter, the members of the Adult Class quarterly, in the very beginning of this quarter, should decide to make it a profitable study from several points of view. There is a vast difference between a casual study of each lesson as it comes week after week, and a deep study of the background and the underlying truths that run through the whole Gospel of St. Luke.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How did Paul's association with Saint Luke influence him and his work? What lesson may we get here regarding faithfulness of an individual to a great cause? As far as you can learn, what caused the other brethren to leave Paul at that particular time? What should be the attitude of all Christians in the time of serious difficulties?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Nativity of John the Baptist.—Luke 1: 5-25, 57-80.

Lesson Two for Sunday, October 13, 1940

The Boyhood of Jesus

(Luke 2: 4—52)

Golden Text: And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Luke 2: 52.

THE PRINTED TEXT*(Authorized Version)***Luke 2:**

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after

three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 9.

Place: Jerusalem.

Persons: Jesus, his parents and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ex. 23: 15, 17; 34: 23.

T.—De. 16: 1, 16.

W.—Matt. 7: 28; Mk. 1: 22.

T.—Jon. 7: 15, 46.

F.—Ch. 9: 45; 18: 34.

S.—Dan. 7: 28.

S.—I Sam. 2: 26.

the Temple before the doctors of the law.

It is the record of the one event which is given in the life of our Lord to the time of his manifestation at the Jordan River when he was baptized by John the Baptist. The narrative embracing the facts of this first appearance of Jesus were given by Saint Luke only.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with the account of Jesus at the age of twelve years old in

The childhood of Jesus in Nazareth to the time of this incident in the Temple is covered by Luke in the statement that he was subject to his parents, and the

statement found in the Golden Text. The student will find, in this account of the boy Jesus, interesting facts which bear upon his divinity.

I. THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST CHILD

(Lu. 2: 40-44)

When he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, verse 42. Jesus was a child who "waxed strong in spirit" as he grew. He was filled with wisdom we are told in verse 40. The grace of God, the heavenly Father's loving favor, was upon him. Remember, he went with his parents to the annual Passover feast. It was splendid for this Son twelve years of age to attend the holy ordinances. Parents should take their children to the church services that they might early learn the need of worshiping God.

When they had fulfilled the days, they returned to their home. The Passover feast lasted for one week, but after the first three days of the feast those desiring to do so were allowed to return to their homes. Dr. James R. Kaye says, "The third day of the feast was the commencement of the so-called **half-holidays**, when it was lawful to return home." But note in this connection that "when they had fulfilled the days" they returned. Mary and Joseph remained, let us believe, until the end of the feast. It is well to continue in the observance of holy worship until the worship period closes. Worldly affairs should not intervene and cut short our worship program. Joseph and Mary returned when they had fulfilled the days. Students of the Adult Sunday School class should get a lesson here from this study of fulfillment. God wants his work done well.

Note in the next place that the child **Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem**. The parents and the company of people were now returning to their homes, and, **supposing him to have been in the company**,

Mary and Joseph went a day's journey before making any inquiry concerning Jesus. No alarm was shown for the first day out as the company of friends journeyed along in a sociable manner. Surely they thought the lad Jesus was in the crowd and there was no cause for alarm. But when the day's journey was drawing to its close, **they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance**. Loved ones who have lost a child can clearly understand the apprehensions which Joseph and Mary had when Jesus could not be found in the company. Loving parents desire to have their children close by when nightfall begins to come upon them. They want to be assured that they are safe in the home. God wants everyone to be safe in his heavenly home. Good Christian workers desire that their neighbors and friends may attend regularly upon the Sunday School and church services on each Lord's Day. There is no need for alarm when we are living in God's presence and abiding by his precepts.

May we not draw a lesson here for our own good? Do we not sometimes consider Christ is near us, but we are led to see later, upon close examination of our acts and thoughts, that there is no trace of his presence with us? Is he not separated from us because we do not keep near him day by day? Does not our religious life become at times so formal and void of spiritual fervor that Christ is felt to be far away? We feel that this is true at times with some people. His presence is needed every day to cheer and guide the acts and thoughts of men.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: At what age may a child be recognized as being eligible to be brought in the Church on his profession of faith in Christ? In our religious life, How should we "fulfill the days"? What significance is there in one's being lost or separated from Jesus?

How should anyone seek Jesus to find him precious to his soul?

II. JESUS FOUND IN THE TEMPLE

(Lu. 2: 45-50)

What is the significance of Jesus, at the age of twelve, being found in the Temple in the midst of the doctors? His parents, no doubt, made inquiry about him at the places where they had stayed during the Passover feast. But not finding him there, they made further search, let us think, about the streets and public places in the city, asking the people about the lost child. They continued the search anxiously, and **after three days they found him in the Temple.** Had they gone there at first, they would have been spared the three days' search. Remember that the number three is especially noticeable in the Bible. They did not give up the search until they had found Jesus. People today are to seek the Lord while he may be found. They are not to give up. When they found him, he was **sitting in the midst of the doctors.** Note, when they saw him, they were amazed. "The Greek word means literally to drive away from, to drive out of one's senses."—Dr. J. R. Kaye. Mary said **Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?** Why did you tarry behind in Jerusalem? We supposed you to have been in the company of our friends on the journey home. We have been three days looking for you.

Let us note at this point what they found him doing in the Temple. He was **sitting in the midst of the doctors** (teachers of the law), **both hearing them, and asking them questions.** This was amazing and astonishing not only to his parents, but also to all that heard him. They simply were astonished at **his understanding and answers,** verse 47. Surely this twelve year old lad greatly surprised the doctors and the listeners when he showed great wisdom and understanding in asking and answering significant

questions. It is always the mysterious, not the common place, that arouses great thought and concern in the minds of the people. The people, those gathered about and in the presence of the doctors and Jesus, were not only amazed at his understanding in asking questions, but also in his wise answers to the questions put to him. It is evident that the twelve year old Son was **strong in spirit.** He was filled with wisdom, and **the grace of God was upon him.** No one could say that the training in the home and in the school could have given him this wisdom and understanding. It was supernatural, beyond their understanding; therefore, there is no wonder why the doctors, the listeners, and his parents were amazed.

Now, may we study Jesus' answer to his mother's question. He said, **How is it that ye sought me?** Did you not know where I was? Should you not have expected to find me here in God's house? Surely you knew it is necessary for me to be in my Father's house? Yes, it was there that he could converse with the teachers of the law. He could show his concern, even at the age of twelve, about religious matters. Accordingly, may we draw a lesson here that the house of God is a fitting place for the youth as well as it is for the old, and that children, even before or around the age of twelve years, should begin to think of religious matters. There is expressed here in Jesus' words the thought of duty. "It is necessary that I be in my Father's house." Children should be taught at an early age their duty to love the house of God, and to be obedient to the Christian teachings given them. Dr. Kaye asks in this connection this question, "Would this indicate the dawning of his Messianic consciousness, that at this early age he is coming into the realization of his relations with his Father?" Many Christians think it is, and associate this incident of Jesus with the approximate time when children should be

thinking seriously of joining the church. Some great men and women of history were known to have confessed faith in Christ as their personal Savior even before they were twelve years of age. The thought of service is expressed here in the words, "about my Father's business." Even at the age of twelve, a child who has confessed Christ can do some service in God's house. He can grow into greater usefulness in religious work as the years pass. Through the Sunday School and the other auxiliaries of the church, the Christian youth can and should be used for God's glory. Herein lies a lesson which the older Christians of the church should note. They should seek to apply this principle by giving the young Christians something to do in religious work.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Mary and Joseph not go to the Temple at first to look for Jesus? What was their surprise when they found him in the Temple? Why were all amazed and astonished at Jesus' questions and answers? How do you explain the matter? What is taught here relative to duty and service?

III. THE GROWTH OF THE CHILD JESUS

(Lu. 2: 51-52)

Jesus left the Temple and **went down with them**. Remember, he was subject to his parents just as any child by nature is subject today to his parents. Although Jesus was the "only begotten Son of God," he was subject to his parents and lived with them in the home at Nazareth until he was grown. Parental care, we can rest assured, was exercised over him in the home as he grew to young manhood.

But his mother kept all these things in her heart, verse 51b. Mary thought over his words and pondered them in her heart. Doubtless she expected that here-

after they would be explained to her. Then she would fully understand them. The deep things of God cannot readily be understood by men. "That which at first is dark, so that we know not what to make of it, may afterwards become plain and easy."—**M. Henry**. We must not cast aside Christ's sayings because we do not understand them when we first hear them. The deep things of the Scriptures should be frequently studied and meditated upon. A clearer understanding of difficult things come to those who will keep those things in their hearts. Years later Mary came to understand better the mysteries of her Son when he had finished his three and one-half years of his ministry. There are things in God's holy Word that we do not fully understand now, but, like Mary, we can keep them in our hearts. God, in his own good time, will make them clearer to us if we will ask his guidance and rely upon his word.

Verse fifty-two says **Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man**. This is meant of his human nature, for in the perfections of his divine nature there could be no increase. His body increased in stature. He became a full grown man. "His soul increased in wisdom, and in all the endowments of a human soul." Relative to this point, Matthew Henry says, "The faculties of his human soul grew more and more capable, the gifts it received from the divine nature were more and more communicated."

Jesus increased **in favor with God and man**. Note the two thoughts here linked together: God in heaven and man on earth. This means that Jesus increased in those graces which rendered him acceptable, in the light of eternal peace and good-will to God and mankind. This is a splendid teaching for young people, as well as for the older people. May they remember that they should grow in stature—have fine bodies and well cared

for physiqués. They should grow in wisdom. Let them study and meditate upon God's Word. Then, as they grow in wisdom, they will grow in loving favor with God and man. Nothing more joyous can come to any life than the happy experience of knowing God's favor is resting upon the human heart.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask a member of the class to discuss the thought "he was subject unto them." What is meant by "his mother kept all these sayings in her heart"? Ask someone to discuss verse 52.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Spiritual Growth.—I Pet. 3: 17, 18; Eph. 4: 14-18; Rom. 13: 13, 14; Eph. 6: 10-18.

Lesson Three for Sunday, October 20, 1940

The Message of John the Baptist

(Luke 3: 3, 8-17, 21, 22)

Golden Text: Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance. Luke 3: 8.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 3:

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded

of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

21 Now, when all the people were baptized; it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him; and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 27.

Place: The wilderness of Judea and Jordan.

Persons: John the Baptist and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 3: 1; Mk. 1: 4.

T.—Ch. 11: 41; II Cor. 8: 14; Jas. 2: 15, 16.

W.—Ac. 2: 37; I Jo. 3: 17.

T.—Ch. 7: 29; Matt. 21: 32.

F.—Ex. 23: 1; Lev. 19: 11.

S.—Matt. 3: 11; Mi. 4: 12.

S.—Matt. 13: 30.

THE INTRODUCTION

The events of last Sunday's lesson occurred about eighteen years before those of this lesson. During that time Christ's time was spent in Nazareth it is thought. Of these years we have meager records of his work, but it is believed he lived with his parents, with his four brothers and sisters, and probably followed the trade of Joseph.

This lesson deals with John the Baptist preaching unto the people and baptizing them in the Jordan River. Also Christ was baptized by John in the Jordan. It sets forth the doctrine of repentance and baptism, and prepares the way for the ushering in of the Gospel of Christ. John's teachings are applicable today to all who will observe the truths which he taught the people.

I. JOHN'S MINISTRY IN THE WILDERNESS

(Lu. 3: 3)

About six hundred years before the coming of our Lord, Isaiah prophesied that a forerunner of Christ would come, and that he would cry out to the people, saying: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40: 3). John the Baptist was the one to whom Isaiah had reference. John began his preaching when he was about thirty years old. He did his first preaching in the country about Jordan. Luke tells us in chapter one, verse seventeen, that he "shall go before him in the spirit and power of

Elias." Matthew tells us also that he came "preaching in the wilderness of Judaea."

The scope and design of John's preaching was to bring all the people of his country to God. Although he resided in the most solitary part of the country, when the word of the Lord came to him, he quitted his deserts and came into the inhabited parts. Is it not true that when God calls a man, he wants him to go to the people where he can do the greatest good? In this respect, John was called to preach to the people living in those parts of Jordan where God's people first came into the land of Judea hundreds of years before. John preached a new baptism, not a sect nor a party, but a profession of faith in God. He preached repentance for the remission of sins. All that would repent, forsake their sinful ways, would be baptized. They were to be sorry for their sinful lives and the corrupt ways in which they had been living. They were to change their minds from evil practices, repent and be saved. God would forgive them. They were to live consecrated lives in the name of the Lord.

The design of the gospel was to make men devout and pious, trustworthy and respectable. They were to become holy and humble before the Lord. They were to be meek and sober, living before God and man. They were to be chaste and just, respecting others' rights at all times. They were to be kind and friendly, exercising the spirit of brotherly love. True repentance meant the exercise of all these things. To be assured of the fullness of God's grace, they were to observe John's preaching principles, and to walk uprightly before the world. Dr. James R. Kaye says, "After the Babylonian captivity those converted to the Jewish religion were baptized."

Note, they were assured of the pardon and forgiveness of their sins upon re-

pentance. Yes, repentance was the sum and substance of John's preaching. The people had to turn to God in sincerity and in truth to receive this forgiveness. God would forgive them, was the theme, if they would become deeply penitent of their evil ways. They were to humble themselves before the Lord and seek his mercy. Ezekiel said of old, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (Ezek. 18: 30). God does not rejoice to see men die in their sins. He sent John to tell the people to repent and be saved from death and destruction. The same God today is pleading to all to forsake their sins, believe on him and be saved before it shall be too late. The gospel is the same now as it was when John preached in Judea, and souls need to be saved now just as those people needed to repent in that day. John was full of the Spirit and preached with a burning zeal to draw the people to God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the manner of John's preaching? "Is Christian baptism a seal of the covenant of grace?" For what were the people baptized? Since John's baptism was not in any name, how did it differ, in this respect, from Christian baptism?

II. JOHN'S GOSPEL MINISTRY AT THE JORDAN

(Lu. 3: 8-17)

Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. John urged those who repented and were baptized to bear fruit worthy of repentance. He desired them to be fruit bearers for the glory of God. They were to show that they had repented of their sins by doing Christian acts worthy of followers of God. In this way they would establish their sincerity. Let there be discovered no hypocrisy in your professed repentance. Let everyone know that you have repented in deed and in truth. Your humility and sincerity must be plainly evident to everyone. The first thing Paul said, when he was converted,

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Ac. 9: 6).

This same principle, to be sure, will apply to converts today. They are to show their sincerity by the kind of lives they live and the Christian works which they should do for the glory of God. In the case of the Pharisee of that day, it was difficult to believe in his sincerity, therefore, it was necessary that it be reliably established before the people.

We have Abraham to our Father. John told the people not to frame excuses concerning their duty of repentance by saying, "we have Abraham to our father." How will it avail you anything for having been children of Abraham if you be not godly people yourselves? You cannot depend upon your ancestry for your repentance. You must not say that this does not apply to you because you are the children of Abraham. Such claims will not suffice for your wicked ways of living. John here is warning them against this false claim that, because they were descendants of so great an ancestor, their righteousness is thereby securely established. It is a fact that righteousness is neither transmitted nor inherited. Christian parents cannot save their wicked children by their own righteousness. It matters not whose descendants we are, righteousness is simply a personal matter with the individual. The Bible plainly teaches this truth. Consequently, John impressed the fact upon the people in his preaching that their being the children of Abraham was a matter of small concern, so much so that "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

The axe is laid unto the root of the trees, verse 9a. Barren trees in the orchard are hewn down and cast into the fire because they bear no fruit. If they serve not for fruit-bearing, let them be burned and gotten out of the way. Just so, if the people do not bring forth

fruit meet for repentance, to the honor of God's grace, let them be cast out. They cannot depend upon others to save them. Accordingly, to those people John was saying, "Now that you are upon your behaviour, look to yourselves." The responsibility is upon you. Men are to be tried and tested by the way they live among their fellow-men and before God, not by their birth, ancestors, parentage nor by their profession. This fact must be well considered. A holy life alone is what anyone shall have to have to prove the genuineness of his religion. That is the essential thing in true religion. Therefore, John the Baptist told the people about Jordan—all who doted upon their ancestry—that individual righteousness was the real test of a godly life.

When the people asked him, **What shall we do then?** He said, **He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none,** verse 11a. He told the people that their duty was to be charitable. Show your faith in God and your true repentance of your sins by your good works. John commanded those who were able to share their possessions with those who were poor. Food and raiment are the two essential supports of life. He that has meat to spare, let him share it with the poor and needy. He that has clothes to spare, let him give to him that is destitute of sufficient garments to keep him warm. This is a fundamental teaching of Christianity. But there are some rich people who seek further riches by oppressing the poor, instead of sharing some of their possessions with them. Greed and selfishness with many people too often overrule the thought of helping to relieve the poor and needy. Possessing faith in God is not enough. Christians are to render material assistance to the needy, in addition to teaching the doctrine of Christ and striving to win souls to God. We are to be our brother's keeper in more ways than one.

John instructed the publicans concern-

ing their duty. When they said, **Master, what shall we do?** His reply was **Exact no more than that which is appointed you.** These publicans were tax-collectors. They were in a position to exact from the people more money than the law required. John knew the corrupt practices of some, hence he warned them not to oppress the people in levying the taxes. Do not over charge the people, but "keep to your book of rates," as one commentator has put it. In other words, collect for Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but do not enrich your pockets by taking more than the law allows. You have been given the office to fill, but you have not been given the right to corrupt it by pocketing "ill-gotten gains." Too often men in positions of honor and trust are found guilty of performing similar practices today in defrauding the people of their money. Places of public trust should be strictly managed, in the sight of God and before the law, by those in charge so that all concerned will be justly treated. Remember, John brought to bear upon these publicans their religious duty of correct dealings with the people.

To the soldiers' question, **What shall we do?** John replied: **Do violence to no man.** Doubtless, these soldiers, like the publicans, were given to acts contrary to their requirements. From John's command, let us believe they were guilty of acts of sinful violence at times against the people. The fact of being soldiers to maintain order and peace among the people of Judea did not give them the right to do violence. Trained soldiers are to be law-abiding citizens, not violent in conduct, but persons whom the public can trust. John did not condemn the publicans nor the soldiers for the offices which they were holding, but cautioned them concerning their religious duty toward the people. Should we not seek to live among our fellow-men in accordance with John's fine teachings given to the

publicans and the soldiers? He further told the soldiers not to accuse any falsely. Do not accuse any as having disobeyed the law when they have not done so. Lay not crimes against them which they have not committed. Seek not to get possession of a person's property by false accusations against him. "There may have been various ways in which soldiers were guilty of this crime."—**Dr. James R. Kaye.** Then, again, John commanded these soldiers to be content with their wages. They were paid to serve the government, and, therefore, they were to be content with their pay. Do not seek to get gain from the people by falsely accusing them of high crimes, and taking bribes. Now that you have shown an interest in religion, seek not to stir up strife among the soldiers and officers of the government, but be content with your wages. Do not use any unlawful means to increase your pay. The truth is their new religious attitude should have had a practical influence in making them to become contented with their wages. When anyone becomes a child of God, he should, as John urged the soldiers, become more content than ever with his conditions.

Men mused in their hearts of John whether he were the Christ, verse 15a. John not only declared that he was not the Christ, but also affirmed that he was not worthy to unloosen Christ's shoes. **I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh.** Don't take me to be the Christ, for he will come, and **he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.** "whose office work will be to convict, enlighten, renew and sanctify the soul." His will be a more powerful influence than mine. You are to look for him.

And with fire. Fire is considered the symbol of vengeance. It is probable that this is the use of the word in this connection. It probably denotes that the ministry of Christ will be far more searching and trying than John's **Whose fan**

is in his hand. In that day the fan was an instrument for producing artificial wind to separate chaff from the wheat. This figure of the threshing floor, which was in that day "an open space, an elevated place for dryness and for the convenience of winnowing the grain by the wind," is used to teach a spiritual lesson. Accordingly, the wheat, representative of the righteous people, will be separated from the chaff which represents the unrighteous. Hence, the figure is used to show this separation and judgment under which the unrighteous individuals shall fall. John's business was to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. He was instructing the people in this connection concerning the Messiah and the power that he would have over the earth.

What about the eternal fire when the Great Judgment shall be declared? How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Here in this life fire consumes, burns up life and property. It inflicts pain upon all flesh, and destroys all life when once it gets complete control. God's Word teaches that fire shall be the lot of the wicked in that great day. They shall suffer untold agony in the tormenting flames of an endless hell. But some do not believe in punishment after dead. They rather spurn the idea of a burning hell, but God's holy word declares it to be true. Their reward shall be the punishment with that fire spoken of in the book of Revelation.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is a person's individual responsibility as to his salvation? What was John's teaching concerning fruit-bearing? What did he tell the publicans and the soldiers to do? Why did the people think John was the Christ? What was his reply to them?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The *Inauguration of Jesus*.—Luke 3: 21, 22; Matt. 3: 13; Jon. 1: 32; Heb. 5: 5; Isa. 11: 2.

Lesson Four for Sunday, October 27, 1940

Christian Motives for Abstinence

(Luke 1: 13-16; 2: 40; 4: 4; 6: 21, 25, 43-45)

Golden Text: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14: 17.

THE PRINTED TEXT*(Authorized Version)***Luke 1:**

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

Luke 2:

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

Luke 4:

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Luke 6:

21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: B. C. 6; A. D. 27, 28.

Place: Nazareth, the wilderness of Judea, and near Capernaum.

Persons: Zacharias, John the Baptist, Jesus and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Num. 6: 3; Jud. 13: 4; Jer. 1: 5.

T.—Gal. 1: 15; Mal. 4: 5, 6.

W.—De. 8: 3; Isa. 55: 1; 61: 3.

T.—Matt. 5: 46; Pr. 14: 13.

F.—Isa. 65: 13; Matt. 7: 16, 17.

S.—Matt. 12: 33.

S.—Matt. 12: 36, 37.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with the subject of

abstinence of certain things that are harmful to mankind. It has to do with John the Baptist's abstinence of wine and strong drink. Also Christ's victory over Satan's first temptation is given in this lesson as a challenge to everyone to abstain from sinful allurements. The lesson brings out the teachings concerning hungering after the things of this life, as contrasted with the hungering of the soul for righteousness. Some vital

truths, concerning the great need of people practicing abstinence or giving up their sinful and corrupt desires, are set forth in plain terms in the discussion of this lesson.

I. THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

(Luke 1: 13-16)

As Zacharias was in the Temple on the Sabbath burning incense upon the altar, "There appeared unto him an angel of the Lord" (Lu. 1: 11). Upon seeing that Zacharias was troubled and fear fell upon him, the angel said, **Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard.**

Zacharias and Elisabeth were very religious and had prayed often that God might bless them with a son. Although they had grown old in years, the angel said to him, **Thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.** He told Zacharias that this son would be the joy of his family. **Many shall rejoice at his birth.** When long waited for mercies come at last, they are the more acceptable to the children of God. The angel assured Zacharias that John would be such a son and that he would have reason to rejoice. **Why? He shall be great in the sight of the Lord.** Religious parents rejoice over their sons and daughters when they take great interest in God's work. Zacharias was not only to rejoice because he was to have a son, but because of the character and the service which he would render in the service of the Lord. Surely God had a divine purpose in giving this son to the world.

He shall be great, verse 15a. John was great in the sight of the Lord, and many people rejoiced and marveled at his wonderful religious works. He was great in the divine regard and estimation. **He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit.** It is interesting to see how the Spirit led him in the great work which he perform-

ed among the people. Jesus declared on one occasion that there was no greater prophet than John the Baptist. Real greatness of an individual is that which is approved of God. The angel told Zacharias that John would turn many of the children of Israel to God. Being filled with the Spirit, John would, declared the angel, go forth in the spirit and power of Elias (Elijah), and prepare the people for the coming of Christ.

This promised son shall **drink neither wine nor strong drink.** Many people of that day, as has been the case in every age, drank intoxicating liquors. But this fore-runner of Christ was to be an abstainer of strong drink. There must have been prevalent drunkenness among the Israelites during the days of Zacharias, since the Old and New Testament Scriptures bear record to this belief. God cannot use wine-bibers and drunkards in his kingdom work. The Nazarenes were required to abstain from the use of wine and strong drink. But it is noticeable here that the angel foretold of John's abstinence of strong drink even before he was born.

The curse of strong drink has been prevalent in every age of the world's history. It is prevalent today in every country. From the most cultured and refined people down to the poorest class intoxicating liquors are used. Many of wealth and high standing use it with no compunction of conscience. Neither the well respected nor the ordinary, who drink freely, seem to be pricked in conscience over the shameful examples of their drinking habits which they are setting before the world. Think how strong drink has beggared and ruined millions of lives in our country! Think of the money wasted and the countless, helpless ones who have been brought to shame and poverty because of strong drink! But John, the great prophet of God, abstained from the use of wine and strong drink. He could not have been filled with

the Holy Spirit and, at the same time, have been a man of strong drink. No one can be filled with strong drink and have the Holy Spirit present with him at the same time. They do not go together; one is of God, but the other is of the Devil.

Another element of John's greatness was manifested in his services in God's kingdom work. The angel told Zacharias that John would turn "many of the children of Israel" to God. In his work of turning many to God, he would be preparing the way for the Lord Jesus. Thus, thirty years after the angel had revealed this truth to Zacharias, he was brought forth to prepare that way. Only such a person could be used in the service of God to direct the people to the Savior of men. It is interesting to study the record and to note the divine will concerning the coming of this promised son. God's plan was carried out in every particular to meet his approval. The work laid down for John to accomplish was fulfilled in his brief ministry. The faithful servant of the Lord, though his time be short as in the case of John, will be counted great by men of devout lives. John's preaching attracted the multitudes and many repented and were baptized.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Where and to what purpose did the angel appear to Zacharias? What did the angel say of John concerning strong drink? What was John's mission to the people? How did he fulfill this mission?

II. CHRIST'S CONFLICT WITH SATAN IN THE WILDERNESS

(Lu. 2: 40; 4: 4)

(Since verse forty in chapter two was treated in lesson two, topic one, we are omitting the treatment of it here.)

After Christ was baptized by John in the Jordan, he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Remember, Christ was not led by the Spirit into temptation. For forty days and nights Jesus was

alone in the wilderness fasting and communing with God. The Divine Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—were together in holy communion during that period. What took place there with the Godhead man's finite mind is unable to fully determine. But there was a purpose in the Master's solitary seclusion and fasting for forty days. Devout men, since Christ's day upon earth, have separated themselves for short periods of time from the crowd and have entered into communion with God. There is felt something deep and holy in a child of God being in the presence of the heavenly Father away from the noise and bustle of life.

Note, at the end of the forty-day period Christ became hungry. Remember, Christ was God incarnate, and, possessing the physical attributes of mankind, he possessed many of the human characteristics. As the first man Adam in the Garden of Eden was visited and tempted by the old Serpent to eat the forbidden fruit, so Christ in the wilderness was tempted by Satan. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. 4: 3b). In this first temptation, Satan is challenging Christ to show his divinity and power by commanding him to change the stones upon the ground into bread and satisfy his hunger. The Devil has always been challenging people to do what he desires them to do. But Christ said, **It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.** Life is more than meat and drink. It is the infilling and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals that makes the complete life. Christ answered Satan with the Word of God. But Satan would have Christ to establish his claim as being the Messiah by turning the stones into bread and satisfying his hunger. Note here, Christ flatly refused to obey Satan's command. He did not permit the evil one to have sway over him. Christ could have turned the

stones into bread and could have satisfied his hunger, but he would not prove his divinity at the repulsive command of Satan. The conflict was won by Christ's firm stand upon the Word of God—"It is written." People today are better able to win victory over Satan by taking the word of God as their supreme guide.

Satan knew Christ was the Son of God but he desired to challenge his deity. No one is too great for him to tempt. "He put forth all his subtlety and power to bring him to sin and thus frustrate the salvation of the world."—Dr. James R. Kaye, *The Teacher's Guide*. People are being tried and tested all the while by Satan who is ever seeking to undermine their high ideals and Christian character. The forces of evil are ever busy, seeking to uproot and destroy the good in the world.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Satan challenge Christ when he was an hungered? How did Christ answer Satan and what meaning did his answer convey? How does Satan tempt people today?

III. THE TWO STATES OF MAN CONTRASTED

(Lu. 6: 21, 25)

Blessed are ye that hunger now. In Christ's Sermon on the Mount, Matthew has rendered the statement thus: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5: 6a). Those who hunger spiritually are resting in a blissful state, for the promise is "they shall be filled." God has promised to satisfy the spiritual desires of the heart. Isaiah said, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, and buy and eat" (Ch. 55: 1a). Spiritual desires are not satisfied with the price of money, but with the grace of God applied to the hearts of those who seek the heavenly Father's mercies. The bless-

ed state of hungering cannot refer to worldly desires, for these spiritual satisfactions will be given in full only in heaven. It is certain that Jesus would not have declared earthly and sensual hungering of sinful people to be a beatitude. Christ had reference to those who would place their trust and faith in God, and would hunger for a greater understanding of his Word. Man's earthly hungering for material and social satisfaction last only for a short time. But the difficulty lies in the fact that these earthly appetites are most apt to rob us of those higher desires of the soul upon which Jesus laid the greater emphasis. We are commanded to lay up treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves are able to break through and steal.

Woe unto you that are full! Jesus tells of the rich man who was full. His harvest was great. He tore down old barns and built new ones. But God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee" (Lu. 12: 20). This man was laying up treasures upon earth at the expense of his soul salvation. Parallel to this thought are Isaiah's words concerning the godly and the wicked: "My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: . . . my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: . . . my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed" (Ch. 65: 13). It is true, those who are satisfied with temporal riches are full, though not altogether happy, for they have their anxieties, but dread to give up their riches, or to share them with others that they might obtain spiritual blessings. Wealth brings everything necessary in a material sense to one's hands, but it has no lasting satisfaction. Therefore, the Master said, **Woe unto you that are full!** The woe will come to the one who puts his only trust in material riches, and is poor toward God. Money can buy many material comforts, but un-

safe is the soul that is empty of God's Spirit.

Ye shall hunger. The time will come, said the holy One, when earthly riches will not suffice. They will not meet the deeper needs of the human heart, nor fill the soul with the Bread of Life. The time will come when the dying sinful soul shall hunger for the spiritual things of God. We are commanded in the holy word "to seek ye first the kingdom of God," and the promise is the granting of material blessings. Spiritual things should never be neglected for material things. People should put God and righteousness first in their lives. If they will do this at all times, material comforts will be added unto them.

Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep, verse 25b. Those who laugh now and take things in a light way will, in that great day, mourn and weep. The laughter of such people will

be turned into sorrow. When such have spent their time on the lower and baser things of life, and have not given any time to the higher and spiritual things will mourn and weep before the great judgment. They cannot hope to face the future with a wasted life—wasted spiritual powers and opportunities—and be able to reap the heavenly reward. They will have to pay the price in weeping and mourning over there for their fruitless lives lived here upon earth.¹

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What are the promises for those who hunger after righteousness? Ask a member of the class to discuss the expression, "Woe unto you that are full." What about those who laugh now and are not serious concerning God's Word?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Teachings Concerning the Law of Nature and of Life.—Lu. 6: 43-45; 16: 11-18; Matt. 6: 24; 7: 15-20; 12: 34, 35; 13: 1-9; Jon. 15: 1-10.

Lesson Five for Sunday, November 3, 1940

Jesus Declares His Mission

(Luke 4: 16-30)

Golden Text: For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19: 10 .

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 4:

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach de-

liverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and won-

dered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Na-aman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath.

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him into the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 28.

Place: Nazareth.

Persons: Jesus and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 2: 23; Mk. 6: 1; Ac. 13: 14.

T.—Ac. 17: 2; Isa. 61: 1; Ps. 45: 2.

W.—Matt. 13: 54; Mk. 6: 2; Jno. 6: 42.

T.—Matt. 11: 23; 13: 54; Mk. 6: 1.

F.—Matt. 13: 57; Mk. 6: 4.

S.—Jno. 4: 44; II Ki. 5: 14.

S.—Jno. 8: 59; 10: 39.

THE INTRODUCTION

"Following the account of the temptation of Jesus Luke states that he came into Galilee and that his work won wide attention. In reading this Gospel, not noting the omission of Luke, we would get the impression that immediately after the temptation Jesus came to Galilee and entered upon his Galilean ministry. Such was not the case as indicated by the following order of events.

"I. Begining of his ministry.

1. The first disciples, Jno. 1: 35-42.

2. Philip and Nathaniel, Jno. 1: 43-51.

3. The miracle at Cana, Jno. 2: 1-11.

4. In Capernaum, Jno. 2: 12.

II. Early Judean Ministry.

1. Jerusalem.

Cleansing the Temple, Jno. 2: 13-22.

First discourse—To Nicodemus, Jno. 3: 1-21.

2. In Judea.

Christ baptizing, Jno. 3: 22-24.

Testimony of John at Aenon, Jno. 3: 25-36.

3. In Samaria.

The woman of Samaria—second discourse, Jno. 4: 4-26.

Thus we see that John alone is the historian of these events.

III. The Galilean Ministry. First Period.

1. Beginning of the ministry.

2. Healing the nobleman's son, Jno. 4: 46-54.

"This brings us to the present lesson. The student should have well in hand the chronological order of the events of our Lord's life and work. This is given in full detail by the author's Analytical Bible."—Dr. J. R. Kaye, *The Teacher's Guide*.

I. CHRIST'S CUSTOM ON THE SABBATH

(Lu. 4: 16)

As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day. "He came to Nazareth when he had gained a reputation in other places, in hopes that thereby something at least of the contempt and prejudice with which his countrymen would look upon him might be worn off."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary**, Vol. V. It is well to note here that Jesus made the statement in verse twenty-four, saying, "No prophet is accepted in his own country." On the Jewish Sabbath (our Saturday), Jesus had been accustomed to attend the synagogue for worship. Now that he had entered upon his public ministry, he preached in the synagogue. Remember, this was his home town—"where he had been brought up." We are also to remember that Jesus observed the Jewish institutions, having been reared under the Jewish customs. The Jewish Sabbath was the proper time in which the pious Jews spent worshipping God. Thus, it was a fitting place for Jesus to begin his preaching in his home town. Note also, the strict Pharisees maintained rigidly the religious observance of the Jewish Sabbath. Christ used the opportunity of beginning his preaching in Nazareth in the synagogue where the people had congregated for worship.

In our own time, the Lord's Day (our Sunday) is set apart for holy worship. It should be strictly observed as such everywhere. All Christian people should seek to go to the house of God on the Lord's Day and enter into true worship together. Their Christian examples of loyalty to God should be so manifested in the lives they live that unbelievers would be led to follow in their footsteps. One day out of seven has been designated for rest from all labors, and set apart for Christian worship. It is certain that

those who rob God of this time are also robbing themselves of many precious spiritual values. Anyone who persists in staying away from God's holy sanctuaries will certainly fail to reap the great promises which God has offered to mankind. The vital thing is developing the habit or custom, as Christ did while on earth, of assembling ourselves together on the Lord's Day for spiritual values.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Should the Christian Sabbath be observed as rigidly today as the Jews observed their Jewish Sabbath? Why? How are people in general breaking the Christian Sabbath in America now? In what way or ways are Christians responsible for the way the Lord's Day is desecrated by the public?

II. CHRIST'S INTERPRETATION OF ISAIAH'S WORDS

(Lu. 4: 17-21)

Jesus had a special message to deliver to the people of Nazareth, and it was no accident that he selected this special passage found in Isaiah 61: 1. It was an important announcement which the people in his home town should hear. The reference is to Jesus and not to Isaiah himself. Jesus was to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted and to preach deliverance to the captives. He was to bring peace and consolation to the hearts of many. He was to set free the bruised and to give sight to the blind.

It is interesting to note that the five things which he was annointed to do had to do with conditions of distress and need. In the time of need Jesus is always a very present help indeed. He never fails to hear the cries of those in trouble. Our knowledge of the Gospel has familiarized us with the wonderful ministrations of our Lord and those who stood in need of his help. His ministrations in the physical and in the spiritual realms have opened the eyes of multitudes of people,

and have caused them to have faith in his infinite power. Although the world needed them, as it does now, divine ministrations in the physical realm, yet it needed in a greater way the spiritual nature filled with his divine love and understanding. Jesus knew that in his home town Nazareth, as was true elsewhere, that there was existing spiritual poverty, spiritual captivity, spiritual blindness and lameness among the people. Therefore, he came to seek and to save the lost from their sins.

Jesus said, **This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears**, verse 21b. This was a wonderful announcement. What Isaiah had said years before regarding Christ's coming to preach deliverance to the people had now come to pass. This was an astounding claim, nevertheless, it was true. Jesus was now ready to preach deliverance to the world. Since that day the gospel message has been preached by God's ministers. The message of redemption has been taken to many heathen nations, and multitudes have been converted to the Christian religion. But it is appalling to note how many people living in the Christian lands today that do not believe in the saving grace of our Lord.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the important announcement which Jesus made to the people in the synagogue? How did it affect the people? What were the five things which Jesus was anointed to do? Discuss them. How does such teaching apply to us today? How did Christ fulfill the scripture referred to here from Isaiah's prophecy?

III. THE BEGINNING OF OPPOSITION TO CHRIST AND HIS TEACHINGS

(Lu. 4: 23-30)

Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country, verse 23b. We believe that it was this mental attitude which Jesus detected in

them. Thus he spoke to the point of it in this way: "What you are saying is, Do in thy country, here in Nazareth, what you have done elsewhere. We have heard of the water having been turned into wine, and the healing of the nobleman's son. Perform some such miracle now so we will know you are the fulfillment of this prophecy." The people of the little town of Nazareth desired him to show his wonderful power unto them, or so they pretended. Since they had heard of his mysterious works in other places, they wished to see him perform some wonders among his home people. But "these people, who insisted on seeing in order to believe, would not have been convinced by any thing he would do."—J. R. Kaye.

Note in the next verse how Jesus readily told them so in these words: **No prophet is accepted in his own country.** Your unbelief stands in the way. What you are asking is an outward demonstration of things to be seen with the human eye. You are asking for a sign, some proof to challenge your unbelief, so it would seem. But your prejudice and unbelief stand in the way of your accepting me with your whole heart as the true Messiah. Since I was reared in your town and a member of one of the simple families of Nazareth, certainly you will not accept me as the Son of God. You are not willing to accept me as prophet, priest and King.

Is it not true today that some very good people are scarcely honored by their closest neighbors for the good deeds which they do? Many people are prone to look, not in the home town or surrounding community for great deeds, or great characters; but rather look abroad for spectacular achievements in others elsewhere. An outstanding act of greatness by home talent usually receives very little regard by the local people. Accordingly, when Christ uttered these striking words, he stated a truth peculiar to the

human race. The goodness and greatness of an outstanding character receive always greater applause from those living at some distance than is received by neighbors. This is particularly true in matters of religion.

In the next place, in support of his position Jesus gave reference of two instances. Said he, **Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias**, verse 25a. While Elijah lived there were many widows in Israel who were as much in need as was the widow in Sarepta in Phoenicia. Being in Israel and of the chosen people, they should have responded more readily to the appeal of Elijah. But the point which Jesus was making here is the fact that they who are closest to the means of grace are very often the least susceptible to such influence, while others less favored are more responsive to the goodness of God. Many people are in need of God's grace today but they will not turn to him for divine assistance. The second instance is the case of Naaman of Asyria who came to Elisha for the healing of his leprosy. Remember, there were a number of lepers in Israel where the prophet Elisha performed his wonderful miracles, but it was Naaman of a pagan country whose heart was touched, and who did the simple thing which the prophet required of him before he could be healed. The greatest good comes to those who will accept without question the religious teachings of God's holy messengers. This is what Jesus wanted the people to understand.

Although the application of these statements to the Nazarenes was immediately perceived by them, they, instead of accepting and profiting by them, were infuriated. Thus, the Lord's statement concerning their spiritual state was justifiable. Jesus knew their spiritual condition and sought, by this method, to bring them to their spiritual conscious-

ness. But they were moved, not by the spirit of praise and acceptance of his mysterious power, but by a murderous anger. Note, they **thrust him out of the city**, and led him **unto the brow of the hill**, verse 29a. Their purpose was to cast him down headlong over the cliff that he might be killed. How true it is that some people do not want to be told of their evil ways! But the purpose of these Nazarenes was foiled, for he, **passing through the midst of them, went his way**, verse 30. Here we have a picture of the majesty of Christ, as he went his way through the midst of the crowd. May we imagine the spell, the awe, which came upon those hardened souls as he, without harm, passed out from among them. Let us think how dumbfounded they were when he left their presence. His influence and power were beyond their control. Such evil hearts set against the Son of God were led to sense in this striking instance something of his divine nature.

Are there not some today who treat the blessed Son of God with contempt? We have reasons to believe that there are people who wilfully ignore Jesus as being the Holy One, and who consider his great teachings as of no eternal value. They are self-possessed and self-confident, bearing the attitude of total independence of God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did the people of Nazareth desire Jesus to do wonderful works in his home town? Why did Jesus say, "No prophet is accepted in his own country"? Why did Jesus give reference to the healing of Naaman and to the widow of Sarepta? Why did the people receive Jesus' words with anger? What did they attempt to do and how did he escape?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Christ's Early Judean Ministry.—Jno. 2: 13-22; 3: 1-21; 3:22-24; 3: 25-36; 4: 4-26.

Lesson Six for Sunday, November 10, 1940

The Golden Rule

(Luke 6: 27-38)

Golden Text: And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. Luke 6: 31.

THE PRINTED TEXT*(Authorized Version)*

Luke 6:

27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28 Bless them that curse you, pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.

30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thanks have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 28.

Place: Near Capernaum.

Persons: Christ, his disciples and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ex. 23: 4; Pr. 25: 21; Matt. 5: 44.

T.—Rom. 12: 20; Ac. 7: 60.

W.—Matt. 5: 39; I Cor. 6: 7.

T.—Pr. 21: 26; Deut. 15: 7-10.

F.—Matt. 5: 42, 46.

S.—Ps. 37: 26; Matt. 5: 45.

S.—Matt. 5: 48; 7: 1.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson brings us to the account of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, as re-

corded by St. Luke. The student is referred to lesson four of this quarter for the statement that this sermon reported by St. Luke is the same as Matthew's Sermon on the Mount by Jesus. It is not a different sermon, as some believe, (the Sermon on the Plain), but the same Sermon on the Mount.

May the student note just here that since the rejection of Christ at Nazareth, discussed in the foregoing lesson, many acts of Jesus have taken place; namely,

the disciples were called, miracles were performed, discussions with the Jews following the second passover, and the selection of the full number of the apostolic group.

We are to remember in this study that Jesus set forth in this great Sermon on the Mount the Constitution and the Subjects of the Kingdom, which, let us consider, embrace the principles regulative of the life and the attitudes of the children of God.

I. THE MEANING AND TEST OF TRUE LOVE

(Lu. 6: 27-31)

The greatest of all Christian virtues is love. In verses 27-31, Christ set forth the divine teachings which true love requires of all men. We are to study carefully what it covers, and what exercise of the life and the attitude of the children of God.

1. Those Whom We Should Love:

Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. But how are we to love our enemies, our haters, and our smiters? What meaning did Christ desire to convey by this commandment? This great love which Christ has enjoined upon us to manifest does not require that we love the enmity and hatred which our opposers hold against us. But we are to love them as human beings for the sake of humanity. We are to love the sinner, but not his wicked deeds. All Christians are to love, for the sake of righteousness and the good that they may do to draw evil-doers to Christ, those who are at enmity with them. This great love to which Christ had reference here has regard to the fact that our enemies, our haters, and our false accusers are human beings who stand in need of what this great love impels us to do. Therefore, we, as real Christians, must look deeper into the life of our enemy than to outward appearances and temporal condi-

tions. It is true that our opposers' sinful and bitter acts against us are repulsive and distasteful to us. But we are to seek to remove this strife and bitter feeling against us with the spirit of love manifested in our hearts for them, as souls standing in need of salvation.

2. The Principles of the Kingdom:

We are to form the habit of praying for our enemies and to seek opportunity to show them loving kindness. This is certainly a fine trait of human morality which all Christians should manifest toward the enemies of righteousness. "No teacher has summoned us to climb higher than this; no learner has reached a loftier summit."—**The Pulpit Commentary, St. Luke Vol. I.** We are to remove from our heart every root of bitterness which we have toward our enemies. We are to exclude all desire in our thinking for their ill fortune. Moreover, we should go a little further by "nourishing in our souls" a positive and kind feeling toward them—manifest a readiness to serve them in the name of Christianity. Since the evil acts of sinful men are prompted by Satan himself, the child of God is commanded to pray for those who spitefully treat him. "Love your enemies...and your reward shall be great."

"When sinful men can see such love, can hear the followers of Christ praying for those who hate them and what they represent, and see them doing good to those who would harm them, their hearts will be touched by such ideals so foreign to their own lives."—**Dr. James R. Kaye, The Teacher's Guide.**

Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other, verse 29a. Christians should not be rigorous to revenge a wrong when it has been done to them. "If anyone smite thee on the cheek, rather than give another blow to him, be ready to receive another blow from him; that is, leave it to God to

plead thy cause."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary.** God will smite our enemies when we take the course of peaceful attitude, for he hath said, "Vengeance is mine." Remember, we are to do good to them that do evil to us. This is what Jesus meant to teach in these verses. Concerning those who would "take away thy cloak, either forcibly or fraudlently, forbid him not by any violent means to take thy coat also (v. 29). Let him have that too, rather than fight for it. And of him that taketh thy goods, that borrows them, or that takes them up from thee upon trust, of such do not exact them; if Providence have made such insolvent, do not take the advantage of the law against them, but rather lose it than take them by the throat" (Matt. 18: 28).—**Dr. Hammond.** Going to law for adjustments of such matters usually engenders greater strife and enmity between the accused and the accuser. It is often better to lose the cloak or the goods than to contend for the right of such material possessions. It is from a carnal nature, not the spiritual, that men seek to return hatred for hatred, and blow for blow.

Give to every man that asketh of thee. Christians are to assist those who are proper objects of charity. People who have no relatives able to help them, nor the means of securing the necessities of life, are to be helped by those who have means to share with them. This is a Christian duty which is enjoined upon all children of God. The disciples of the early Christian church sought to meet this command of giving to the poor, and they set a fine example for us.

3. The Golden Rule:

As ye would that men should do to you do ye also to them likewise, verse 31. This rule commends itself to all men. It is plain and simple, and everyone can understand its meaning. Moreover, it is just and fair to all alike. Everyone can

see that if "the light that is in him be not darkness," it is the right thing for him to do. This rule covers the entire scope of human life, as far as our relations one to another are concerned. It is the Golden Rule of Conduct—all our dealings and doings in all the various relations in which we stand to our fellow-men. This one rule of Christ is the supreme precept for man's conduct one with another.

If we are to keep this great command, we must be prompted by three things: namely, (1) have an earnest desire to follow Christ's own example; (2) have a strong purpose of heart to do his holy will; (3) possess a Christian interest in our neighbors' well-being.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What did Christ mean by these words, "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you"? How should the forgiving spirit be manifested toward our enemies? Why? What should be the manner of our giving to the poor and needy? Ask a member of the class to discuss the meaning of the Golden Rule.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S LOVE GREATER THAN THE SINNER'S

(Lu. 6: 32-34)

Sinners love also those that love them, verse 32b. This is mutual or reciprocal love. It is a natural characteristic of the human race. As like begets like, so most people are prone to love those who love and respect them. There is nothing self-denying in that; "it is but following nature," so one commentator has stated. A person does not have to be a child of God to manifest this kind of love for someone.

If we love only those who love us, we are selfish, and there is no special praise attached to this kind of love. Even sinners do this from a natural impulse. Yes, vile persons, those whose lives are not regulated by the higher laws of the

kingdom, can manifest this kind of love. This principle of Christian living applies to the doing for others. For example, if a Christian lends something, or gives personal assistance in a material way to someone with the view of being repaid by a similar act, he is doing no more than what the average sinner would ordinarily do. What thanks have we, as Christian followers, from befriending our neighbor with this motive in our hearts? Jesus said, **Sinners also do even the same.** They can love and help a neighbor because of the natural feeling which they have for a neighbor or a friend. But the Christian is to do something more excellent which a sinner will not do. He is to love, forgive, and willingly befriend even his worst enemies. We must render good for evil, and love for hate and malice. By so doing God will reward us according to our loving kindness toward our bitterest opponents.

This pure love which Christ had reference to here does not seek personal gain. The true Christian, in manifesting this kind of love to his fellow-men, does not ask, as the man of the world asks, "What do I get out of it?" His returns consist of a heart full of joy over the Christian service which he has rendered. His happy reward comes from the heavenly Father above. Nothing could be more satisfying and uplifting to any child of God for the valuable services which he may render to the enemies of Christ.

It is not the easiest task performed that always results in the most good, but the one that results into the greatest spiritual value to humanity. It may be hard for a Christian, at times, to love and befriend, in the sense that Christ had in mind, his bitterest enemy; but when he has once performed the Christian act for the good of his opponent, then there comes to him a joy which God only can give.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is

the difference between loving those who love us and loving those who do not love us?

III. THE SINFUL ERROR WHICH CHRIST CONDEMNED

(Luke 6: 35-38)

The types of judging and condemning which Christ forbids here are those of a wrong and a guilty order. Let us consider them in the following way. There is the hasty judging which some people do without careful consideration of others' rights and privileges. Such are prone to commit serious errors very often against their fellow-men. We are to be very careful concerning this sin. In the next place, many people make uncharitable and unjust judgments regarding others' views of certain things. "All uncharitableness is sin in the sight of Jesus Christ. Also, when the want of a kindly charity leads us to misjudge and so to warn our brother, we fall under the condemnation of God's holy word." Such erroneous acts of ours becomes a personal displeasure to him. We are, therefore, to be very careful not to fall into the habit of misjudging others. Then there is the harsh condemnation of others. This type of judging comes in the form of harsh language or tone of expression which shows severity and which tends to crush the hearts of our friends rather than to reform them, or draw them closer to God. Such methods of criticising or judging others tends to daunt the spirit in the human heart, and to weaken it instead of inciting it to better understanding and closer friendship. God will condemn us for our injustice to our fellow-men. If a Christian is prone to wrongfully judge his friend, will not the friend in turn treat him with the same severity? In many cases, we believe he will, for many people will seek to render blow for blow. We are to be careful, therefore, in forming judgments concerning people. Our judgments should be

just, and we should show mercy toward those with whom we have any dealings. It is a fact, "They who show no mercy will find none when they need it for their own souls."—**The Pulpit Commentary.** But, if we will judge leniently and condemn very sparingly, we will then find that men are usually just unto the just ones and generous unto the generous minded individuals. Let us guard ourselves, therefore against these three types of judging; namely, (1) hasty judgments, those made without due consideration; (2) uncharitable judgments, those that are untrue and unjust, and seek to hurt the individual; and (3) harsh condemnations, those which are bitter and galling to the senses of others.

Remember, the judging and condemning spirit always creates a hardness of nature in the individual and not a pleas-

ant and forgiving disposition. On the other hand, the forgiving spirit is not the one to make harsh judgments against others, and to stir up strife and contention among people. The forgiving and agreeable spirit should always be manifested in the heart of the individual with the view of being kind and pleasant unto all people.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What three types of judgments should one refrain from making? When we judge others, how should we do it? What kind of spirit should we manifest toward our fellow-men?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Giving Spirit—Pr. 19: 17; Matt. 7: 2; 10: 42; 25: 40; Mk. 4: 24; Jas. 2: 13; 2 Cor. 9: 6-8; Heb. 6: 10; I Th. 1: 3; II Th. 1: 6, 7; II Tim. 1: 18.

Lesson Seven for Sunday, November 17, 1940

Jesus' Concern for Life and Health

(Luke 7: 2-15)

Golden Text: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10: 10.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(*Authorized Version*)

Luke 7:

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for

I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he

had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 28.

Place: Capernaum and Nain.

Persons: Jesus, the elders of the Jews, the centurion and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 8: 5-13.

T.—Luke 8: 54.

W.—John 11: 43, 44.

T.—Acts 9: 40-42.

F.—Rom. 4: 17, 18.

S.—Matt. 9: 23-26.

S.—Mk. 5: 38-42.

THE INTRODUCTION

After the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went back to Capernaum. Having been rejected at Nazareth, his home town, he made Capernaum, which became the scene of many of his parables and miracles, his headquarters.

In this lesson we have two instances in which Jesus brought great joy to burdened souls. The first part deals with the story of the centurion's faith in Jesus, and the healing of his servant about whom he was greatly concerned. The other incident is that of Jesus raising from the dead a widow's son at the gate of the city of Nain. Both incidents are wonderful teachings of Christ's power over disease and death, and serve as splendid truths for study in this lesson.

I. THE CENTURION'S CONCERN OVER HIS SICK SERVANT

(Luke 7: 2-5)

This centurion was the commander of

an hundred soldiers in the Roman military service at Capernaum. The point of study here is: the great concern of this centurion for his sick servant. The servant, who was so dangerously ill, was dear unto him. He must have been very dutiful and faithful to his master; that is to say, a very likeable character, or else his lord would not have been so deeply moved over his illness. Thus, his possessing great sympathy for the sick man, the centurion desired to have something done for him. Masters of servants and employers of laborers should manifest, at all times, the humanitarian spirit for those under their care. In times of sickness and distress especially, they should seek, as did this centurion, adequate assistance for those who are looking to them for kindly acts.

Accordingly, when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, verse 3a. Note that he sent for Jesus who had been doing mighty works among the people. Such miraculous healing was, it is to be understood, rapidly noised abroad, and this centurion, feeling his unworthiness as an uncircumcised Gentile, called upon the elders of the Jews to visit Jesus. These elders, not ordinary individuals but persons of authority, were the proper ones, thought this centurion, to visit Jesus and to get him to come and heal his servant. They

went and besought him instantly (earnestly). Note the quick service which these Jews rendered at the centurion's request. It was an act of kindness to both the centurion and the sick servant. They showed an interest in helping the sick man. Should not Christians be ready and willing to render a helping hand to those standing in need of physical and spiritual assistance? Remember, this servant was sick unto death, ready to die. "St. Matthew calls the disease paralysis, and adds that the sufferer was in extreme pain. The disorder was probably some dangerous form of rheumatic fever, which not unfrequently attacks the region of the heart, and is accompanied with severe pain, and proves in many instances fatal."—*The Pulpit Commentary*.

These elders told Jesus, That he (the centurion) was worthy for whom he should do this. They freely pled for the centurion's request to be granted. He is a worthy man said they. He loves our nation. He has built for us a new synagogue. "Hereby he testified his veneration for the God of Israel."—*M. Henry*. Is it not true that those who do good works of that kind are always worthy of double honor? This centurion had shown to the people at Capernaum his interest and concern in their well-being, and, therefore, the elders of the Jews were ready to return the favor. Without delay they hastened to tell Jesus that the centurion greatly desired his sick servant to be healed. Should we not be ready to befriend our fellow-men, those who are worthy of our acts of kindness, when we are called upon to do so? The Bible teaches us to render faithful service to our fellow-men. Note, these elders were helping a Gentile, a worthy man, one who was deeply interested in his servant, "Who was dear unto him." May we not consider that the Jewish people held this centurion in high esteem, and greatly appreciated his kind regard for them.

a Gentile sending Jews to Christ for help, and the only instance on record of Jews coming to Christ in behalf of a Gentile. It was Christ in his saving work who removed the middle walls, the partitions, and has made us all one in him."—*Dr. James R. Kaye, The Teacher's Guide*.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why was the centurion much concerned about his servant? Why did he send the elders to Jesus? How did the centurion stand among the Jews at Capernaum? What lesson do we have here relative to the Jew and the Gentile?

II. THE CENTURION'S HUMILITY AND FAITH

(Luke 7: 6-10)

Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof, verse 6b. This is an expression of humility. It represents the feeling of unworthiness which the centurion had regarding Christ's entering his home. His littleness and unworthiness are contrasted here with the great spirit and power of the loving Savior. The centurion considered that Christ was too great and wonderful a being to come into his house. You are wonderful but I am simple; you are divine but I am carnal. Let us think his view was expressive of the attitude of the true repentant sinner. He recognized the supernatural powers in Christ, but considered himself an unworthy creature. When a truly humble person is in the presence of God, he is made to feel his littleness and unworthiness before the holy trinity.

The great Queen Victoria was once asked, "What would you do if Christ came and you were brought into His presence?" Her reply was, "I would take off my crown, and lay it at His feet." That crown represented the great British empire. But sinful people everywhere are to place their lives, not the symbol

"This is the only recorded instance of

of material power, at Jesus' feet, and humble themselves before the Lord, seeking forgiveness of their sins and salvation of their souls. The trouble with so many people is they are not willing to humble themselves before their Redeemer.

Note in the next place, the centurion's faith in Christ's authority. He brings a comparison here in these words: **I also am a man set under authority. I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh.** My soldiers obey my commands. They are ready to carry out my orders. When I ask my servant to do this thing or that, **he doeth it.** Moreover, having learned of your power to heal the sick, I have faith that you can heal my servant. At your command the disease will leave him. I am sure of that. You can make him well again. **Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.** You have performed miracles of healing here in our country, and I have faith in your power to heal my servant. You can heal him at a distance. Just say in a word and he shall be healed. What an expression of faith in the power of Christ! Surely this man of authority and power over human conditions can but speak the word, or will the thing to be done, and it shall be done. Such was the expressed belief in the supernatural power of Christ. His healing authority and power reach not only to the physical defects of man, but also the spiritual infirmities of his soul as well. Certainly, his healing power is most needed to be applied to the sin-sick souls of men.

Verse nine tells us that Jesus heard the centurion's words, and that **he marvelled at him.** Jesus was deeply impressed by the manifestation of such faith. The centurion had opened his heart in faith and confidence in the Master, and had shown a firm belief in his healing power. Upon hearing these words, Christ turned to the people gathered about him, and said, **I have not found so**

great faith, no, not in Israel. This centurion has expressed faith in God's only begotten Son. He has expressed his faith in the authority and power of Christ the Lord. Israel, the Jewish nation, has not shown such faith in me. No, I have not found among my people, the Jews, such faith as this uncircumcised Gentile has just expressed to me. There is no wonder that Christ commended him for his great faith. Is it not true today that a great many people, though schooled in religion as were the Jews in that day, who do not exercise an abiding faith in the divine authority and power of Christ? We believe there are multitudes of them who lack this great faith.

Note the exercise of Christ's authority and the outcome of such faith as shown by the centurion. When they who were sent, the elders of the Jews, returned to the house, they found the servant whole. Christ had healed him. The centurion's anxiety was relieved, and the blessing of healing was administered to his faithful servant. When faith is exercised in the power of God, the great healing of body and soul will be wrought by the heavenly Father's divine grace. No matter how much power may be in the wire, the trolley cannot be affected by it until direct contact is made to give it motion and effectiveness for the good of man. Just so, when faith is touched with the power of God, mighty works are manifested unto the children of men. Christ has the power to save us, but we are to manifest first our faith in that power and to accept his saving grace. We are to seek that power and abide by his holy word.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How did the centurion humble himself before Christ? What was his conception of Christ's power and authority? How did he express his power over his soldiers as contrasted with Christ's power over diseases? How did Jesus express his feeling concerning the centurion's great faith?

III. THE DEAD RAISED TO LIFE AT THE GATE OF NAIN

(Luke 7: 11-15)

Ancient Nain, a village of Galilee and southwest of Capernaum, was situated on the northwest edge of the "Little Hermon," where the ground falls into the plain of Esdraelon. The gate of which was made illustrious by the raising of the widow's son. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

Verses eleven through fifteen give the story of Christ raising the widow's son to life. This scene took place at the city gate as the Jews were taking the dead man out of the city to bury him among the tombs. With the exception of kings and distinguished persons, the people were not allowed to bury their dead within the walls of the city (1 Sam. 28: 3; 2 Kgs. 21: 18).

The day after the foregoing example of Christ's healing the centurion's sick servant, he went with many of his disciples and others into the city called Nain. This town was some twenty or more miles from Capernaum. The town is approached by a narrow, steep ascent. "On either side of the road are sepulchral caves. It was in one of these that the dead man was about to have been laid when the Master met the little mourning procession winding down the steep road as he and his crowd of followers were toiling up the ascent nearing the gate of the city."—*The Pulpit Commentary*.

Note, when Jesus saw the mother of the dead son, **He had compassion on her**. He had a tender feeling for her because of the death of her only son. Doubtless he was her only dependence, and she felt all the more the seriousness of her loss. Hence, a dark moment had come into her life. It is true the loss of loved ones brings moments of great sadness, and in the case of this widow whose only son

had died the sorrowing was very great. But the Master had unexpectedly appeared before her and the people at the gate. He said, **Weep Not**. Christ was there to remove her heart-aches and to bring peace to her soul. Those who were bearing the dead body lying in the bier stood still. Christ came and touched the bier, and he cried, **Young man, I say unto thee, Arise**, verse 14b. Yes, He, to whom was given "all power," stopped that funeral procession and gave life back to the dead son. **He that was dead sat up, and began to speak**. Life had been restored to him in a moment's time. He began to speak to those about him as evidence of consciousness and knowledge of those in his presence. What wonderful manifestation of Christ's power! What joy and wonder were witnessed among these people standing by the son restored to life! The man who just a moment before was dead and speechless, is now alive and able to converse with his friends. Think what happiness and rejoicing must have come over the widowed mother as she looked upon her son coming forth from the bier and speaking to her!

That body was being carried out of the city for burial, and no one doubted the fact that the widow's son was dead. Only He who had the power over life and death could change the condition of that body back to life. Remember, this is the first instance of Jesus raising the dead to life. Note moreover, he who had power to still the storm, to cast out demons, to heal the halt, the blind, and the dumb, had also the power over death and the grave. Just as Jesus raised this man to life, so he brought back to life the little daughter of Jarius (Matt. 9: 23-26), and Lazarus who had been dead four days and in the tomb (John 11: 43, 44). But to him who had "all power" raising the dead meant no more than healing the centurion's servant, or the withered hand of the paralytic.

As an application of his wonderful power, let us remember that he can raise to life the vilest sinner who is dead in trespasses and sins. "As the raising of that young man's dead body to life was work that only God could perform, so bringing the soul dead in sin into spiritual life is the work of God only."—**James R. Kaye.** We know that the sinner must be born again. He must put on the New Life in Christ Jesus before he will be able to walk in the heavenly way. He must be redeemed by the shed blood of Christ on the cross.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the custom of the Jews as to the burying of their dead? Ask a member of the class to describe what took place at the gate of the city. What other persons did Jesus raise from the dead? What is the teaching here relative to Jesus being able to raise sinners dead in trespasses and sins?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Faith and Life.—Heb. 11: 1-40; Jon 15: 1-27; Gen. 22: 1-14.

Lesson Eight for Sunday, November 24, 1940

Attitudes towards the Gospel Message

(Luke 8: 4-15)

Golden Text: Take heed therefore how ye hear. Luke 8: 18.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 8:

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

5 A sower went out to sow his seed; and, as he sowed, some fell by the way-side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it:

6 And some fell upon a rock; and, as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture:

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it:

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

10 And he said, Unto you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of

God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way-side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which, in honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 28.

Place: Capernaum.

Persons: Christ and the multitude at the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 13: 2; Mk. 4: 1.

T.—Matt. 13: 10; Mk. 4: 10.

W.—Isaiah 6: 9.

T.—Mk. 4: 12.

F.—Matt. 13: 18.

S.—Mk. 4: 14.

S.—Matt. 13: 19.

THE INTRODUCTION

In our last lesson we studied the incidents of Jesus healing the centurion's servant, and the raising to life the widow's son at the city gate of Nain. After having spent some time going through Galilee, Christ returned to Capernaum.

One day as he went to the seaside, a great multitude gathered about him. He entered a boat and began preaching to the people on the shore close by him. His message was made in a different way from anything the people had ever heard before. It was the beginning of his teaching by parables.

In the study of the Parable of the Sower, the student will find represented four classes of people, or four attitudes towards the Gospel message. In this method of teaching, Christ used a simple picture of the sower of the seed to teach spiritual truths of his kingdom.

I. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

(Luke 8: 1-8)

There are three things in this parable worthy of vital study; namely, The Sower, The Seed, The Soil. In this study we may consider the Holy Spirit the Sower; God's word the seed; and the heart of man the soil. Christ taught through this parable simple but vital truths of the Gospel by the use of plain things from the corn-fields of Galilee that many people would catch the meaning and make the application of its teachings to their own lives. Many of the people gathered on the shore of Galilee before him that day were acquainted with the farm life

of Palestine. Therefore, what he was about to picture to this gathered multitude from the plains and villages of Galilee would be a familiar scene to them. Consequently, they would be capable of a better appreciation of its message to them.

1. Seed Scattered on the Wayside:

Some fell by the wayside. The seed scattered by the sower on the wayside, hard soil not broken up by the plow, would lie exposed upon the hard ground. It would have no chance to sink into the soil. Thus, these seed would have no opportunity to take root and produce good fruit when the harvest season had come. This picture of the seed falling by the wayside may be descriptive of the sower, as he walked down the hard pathway and scattered a handful of seed on both sides of him. Some seed fell on the hard wayside from his hand as he moved it from side to side in the sowing of the seed. These seed lying exposed on the surface of the hard ground were readily devoured by the birds. In connection with his travels in Palestine, Dean Stanley has had the following to say concerning this parable:

"I remember no where else in Palestine, every feature of the great parable. There was the undulating corn-field descending the water's edge; there was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling here and there on either side of it, or upon it; itself hard with the constant tramp of horse and mule and human foot." (Sinai and Palestine, Ch. XIII)

2. Seed Sown on Stony Soil:

This stony soil is considered by some commentators as a rocky portion of the corn-fields. Such places had very little soil on the rocks. "The picture here is not of a soil full of stones, but of a rocky portion of the corn-land where the rock

is only covered with a thin layer of earth."—**The Pulpit Commentary.** Consequently, the roots were unable to penetrate deep enough to get moisture and plant food for much growth. The seed soon germinated in the thin soil with the influence of the moisture from the heavy dews and the heat of the sun, but the solid rock just under the thin surface of earth prevented vigorous growth and a harvest of good fruit. **It withered away because it lacked moisture.** The hard rock was fatal to its life of productive fruit-bearing. In nature, as in a great many other things, conditions must be right for the greatest results for the good of man and the glory of God.

3. The Seed Sown among Thorns:

Some fell among thorns. As the seed of the sower sprang up, the thorns came up also and choked them. We are told by travelers in the Holy Land that one is "struck with the number of thorny shrubs and plants that abound there." Some are small, but some are as tall as a man. "The traveler finds them in his pathway, go where he may." This is descriptive of a part of the corn-field where the sower's seed fell. In such places the thorns and shrubs had not been dug out and burned up. Consequently, such shrubs and thorns grew along with the grain, crowding it, choking it, and absorbing the moisture and much of the fertility from the soil. Under such condition the seed had very little chance of lively growth or much fruit-bearing. This is another instance of unfavorable conditions for the sower's seed. Here again one sees the hindrance standing in the way of a good harvest. Hindering causes, or obstructions to man's efforts, very often thwart his purposes and affect his future.

4. Seed Sown in Good Soil:

Other fell on good ground. These seed sprang up, grew into sturdy plants,

and bore a fine harvest of fruit. The soil was good and the conditions were favorable for a vigorous growth and a fine harvest. The increase was an hundredfold. A single grain of corn will yield an hundredfold or more. One grain of mustard seed, planted in good soil and nurtured under good conditions, will yield a thousandfold. Note, in this case of the sower's seed this type of soil is free from the hindering and hurtful conditions which affected the other three. Here the seed had depth of earth, moisture and fertility—the conditions which were conducive to good growth and a fine harvest. Proper rootage was secured; nothing in the way to choke growth and fruitage; and the result was a fine harvest of grain. There were no hindering causes to cause it to wither away and die. The good ground was well prepared to receive the seed and to produce a good harvest. Such favorable conditions contributed to an abundant harvest.

Note here, the trouble with the first three cases of sowing was not with the seed, for they were the same. The sower was the same. The difference was in the three types of soil. The seed fell from the sower's hand on the hard, the stony, the thorny, and the good soil. It is a well known fact that different soils will produce different kinds of harvest. Good sowers and good seeds must have the best of soil to get the best results. Christ is teaching in this parable a fundamental truth of life.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: In the study of this parable why is the study of the Sower, the Seed and the Soil so important? Describe the wayside on which some seed fell. How did the stony soil differ from the wayside soil? Tell how the thorns and shrubs choked the grain sown among thorns. What was the result of the seed sown in good soil?

II. HOW JESUS EXPLAINED THE PARABLE

(Luke 8: 9-15)

The disciples asked Jesus, saying, **What might this parable be?** What meaning does it hold for the Jewish people? They knew that Jesus meant to teach some lesson from this concrete illustration, but what was to be the application of this teaching to the things pertaining to the kingdom? To this question Christ readily replied, **The seed is the word of God.** As the grain is to be planted in the soil to bring forth an harvest in due season, so God's Word is to be planted into the hearts of men to bring forth fruit to the glory of God.

1. The Seed the Word of God:

In this parable the natural seed, as a grain of wheat, barley, rye or corn, contains the dormant life germ which, when placed under favorable conditions in the soil, will germinate and grow into fruition. God's Word, in a figure let us reason, contains the life power of spiritual fruit. It is true that the seed in the natural world can only be brought forth by divine power. The sower of the natural seed did not create them. They were given to him by the divine Creator. In the spiritual realm the same is true. The seed, The Word of God, is given as a divine revelation from God to the heart of man. Furthermore, we have no power to create the seed, but we have the free privilege of the sowing of it in the hearts of men. Just as we cannot make a grain of wheat by all the powers we possess, so we cannot create the forces by which it is germinated and brought to fruition. The same is true of the Word of God, the spiritual seed, which is given for the spiritual implantation in the hearts of men. God alone can supply the proper conditions for the new spiritual life. His plan of salvation is divine and no man can change it.

2. The Seed Planted by the Wayside:

The wayside soil is representative of those individuals who hear the Word of God, but the Devil takes away the Word out of their hearts. Here we have a condition of the soil (the heart of man) which is not in the proper mode or condition to enfold, grasp and keep, the Word of God. There is nothing wrong with the seed. The trouble here is it could not properly enter the soil, the soul of man because of hardness of heart or indifference to its influence and power. Therefore, not being deeply embedded in the heart, but, on the other hand lying exposed to external influences, it was an easy matter for the fowls of the air, sin and Satan, to snatch away the Word of God. It is the fact that the hardened heart of man does not furnish a ready and effective means by which the Word of God may enter and bear good fruit. Thus it is seen that it is an opportunity for Satan to intervene and prevent the Word from becoming embedded in the life of this class of people. This type are simply hearers. What they hear of the Word lies on the surface of the mind, as the seed sown on the wayside lies exposed upon the ground. So, having no depth of purpose or love for receiving the Word of God, this class of people do not retain the teachings of the Gospel, nor bear fruit for the kingdom of righteousness. Accordingly, the truth of the Word does not find its way into the inner life of this class of people. They are the wayside group—the casual and indifferent thinkers concerning the Word of God. They will admit that there is nothing wrong with the Gospel, but they simply do not receive it at heart, nor let it become a guiding principle in their lives. They are simply trodden down, and the word taken out of their hearts, and are devoured by Satan, lest they should believe and be saved.

3. The Seed Sown in Stony Soil:

Christ said that the seed sown in the stony soil **have no root**. When this class of people hear the Word, they **receive the word with joy**. For a while they believe, but they have no root, no depth. They are like the thin soil on the stony ground. Note, this second class readily believe and do rejoice, but they flourish only for a season, like the grain of wheat planted in the rocky soil, and then fall away. They did not retain the Word in their hearts. When God's Word was dropped into their hearts, they quickly received it, but these have not much root. They are representative of the class not having much depth of soil for the reception of God's Word. Consequently, the temptations and allurements of this life cause them to fall away. They wilt; that is, lose their vigor and activeness for God when thrown under the influences of Satan's power, as the grain, when planted in the rocky soil, soon comes up and wilts away under the heat of the sun because of not having much depth or root.

By simple application, let us think of this type of believers in the following ways. During the revival meeting they make a profession of faith in Christ Jesus as their personal Savior. Immediately they begin to show a great change of heart. They readily become active in the church, the Sunday School, and other auxiliaries of the church. They begin to take an active interest in the ongoing of their church program. They are religious enthusiasts, to say the least, until something happens. Then they, having no depth of root, not deeply grounded in the fundamental principles of God's holy word, begin to weaken and then fall away. Or, someone has criticised them for the way they have been showing their interest in religious work, or others in the church have been doing things that did not suit them. Their feelings have been hurt. The Tempter has tried them. Consequently, they are ready to

give up. We see today some people like this type in the churches. Some of them quit attending services, while others continue to go, but do not show any concern for the Word of God nor for lost souls. They are either brooding over petty grievances with some of the church members, or are preoccupied with material and sensual things. Thus they show no signs for fruit-bearing in God's kingdom. The soil of their hearts is too shallow for deep rootage of God's Word. They are simply dead members in the church.

4. The Seed Scattered among Thorns:

"In the first instance the seed did not enter the soil (the heart). In the second, it scarcely more than entered."—J. R. Kaye.

In the third case of the seed, the Word of God, it entered the heart but the mind was preoccupied with certain things of this life. As a result the seed was deprived of freedom of growth. It was choked, hindered from free course of maturity and fruit-bearing of any appreciable value. This type represents the class of people, when they have heard the Word, go forth but are **choked with cares, and riches and pleasures of this life**. The Word of God is prevented from becoming fruitful in those lives which are pre-occupied with the cares and pleasures of this world. Is it not true that many go to church on Sunday, hear a good sermon and are impressed with its message to them, but because of their minds being pre-occupied with the cares of this life, the good thoughts of the message are choked out? Worldly pleasures, riches and the cares of this life readily direct the interests of this class of people into worldly channels. Spiritual ambitions, though inspired for a time in this type of soil, are choked out by the pleasure-seeking persons. The trouble with this class is there is too much of worldliness in the heart. Such

cannot live two orders of life. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." When God is not fully enthroned in the heart, the Devil enters and chokes out the Word. Hence, little or nothing is accomplished for the glory of God. He is not taken as King and Master of their lives. They bring forth **no fruit to perfection.**

5. The Seed Sown in Good Soil:

But the good ground, the productive soil, is representative of the class who, **in an honest and good heart**, hear the word and keep it. In this fourth case, the soil is conducive of fine fruit-bearing. In this case the conditions were right. The hardened, stony and thorny soils can be made right too, but they will be made right only when the soil is so conditioned that as the seed enters it is given sufficient depth and rootage for permanent growth and fruitfulness.

There have been, for example, hard-hearted individuals whose lives have been broken up, and they have yielded to the power of God, and have borne fruit. There have been others who had a stony heart, but they received the word and have borne some good fruit. Moreover, there have been still others who once were choked with the cares, and riches and pleasures of this life, but yielded to the implanted Word, and lived lives of service to God. Conditions were made right in their hearts to enable them to live the Christ-life.

Under such conditions as are represented by the good ground—hearts that are wholly receptive to the Word of God—the seed has full opportunity to grow into full strength, maturity and fruitfulness. But some lives may be much more fruitful than others. Some may produce thirty, some sixty, and some an hun-

dred fold. The good-soil individual produces fruit, fit for the Master's use, according to his talent or ability to do so. We are to remember that in these four types of soil the conditions were not alike, but the seed was the same. Thus Jesus described various states or conditions of human life. Hence a careful study of this parable enables us to look into our lives and ask the question: To which class do I belong? If I am not in the good-ground class, what is the cause? If I am with the stony group, how can I become a member of the good-ground group?

Every normal individual is sowing, either consciously or unconsciously, deeds of life to reap a destiny. If the deeds be good, the end shall be crowned with a happy victory; but if they are evil and fruitless, then the end shall be marked with death and destruction. He who sows to the flesh for the sake of sensual gain will reap in the end shame and corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit for the joy of this life and the hope of heaven, shall be crowned with the heavenly reward. So, the life that sows the seed of righteousness can expect to reap the harvest of heavenly bliss.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What class of people does the wayside soil represent? Why did the stony-soil group not retain the Word? Ask a member of the class to describe the third type of soil. How may those of the good-soil type differ in fruit-bearing? What is necessary for the first three types of people to become fruit-bearers in God's kingdom work?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: The Use of One's Talents.—Matt. 25: 14-30; Matt. 18: 24; 21: 23; Lu. 19: 13-24; 12: 44-47; 2 Tim. 2: 12; Heb. 12: 2; 1 Pet. 1: 8.

Lesson Nine for Sunday, December 1, 1940

An Exacting Discipleship

(Luke 9: 49-62)

Golden Text: No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Luke 9: 62.

THE PRINTED TEXT*(Authorized Version)*

Luke 9:

49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them,

and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man, said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 29.

Place: Capernaum. From Galilee to Judea.

Persons: Christ, his disciples and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Nu. 11: 28; Mk. 9: 38.

T.—Ch. 11:23; Matt. 12: 30.

W.—Mk. 16: 19; Ac. 1: 2.

T.—II Kg. 1: 10, 12.

F.—Matt. 8: 19, 20.

S.—Matt. 8: 21, 22.

S.—Matt. 10: 40; 23: 11, 12; Mk. 9: 37.

THE INTRODUCTION

The preceding lesson was an exposition of Christ's Parable of the Sower. Following it St. Luke has recorded other miracles which Jesus performed; namely, stilling the storm, raising the dead, curing the diseased and relieving those possessed of evil spirits.

Following Christ's instructions to his disciples concerning humility, which he used by the means of a little child, this lesson opens with John's inquiry. This was in Capernaum. The student will find the lesson laying special emphasis upon brotherly charity as taught by Jesus, and Christ's set purpose to carry out the work which the heavenly Father had planned for him to do. The call to discipleship is clearly set forth by the Lord to his followers in the illustrations which are given in the lesson text.

I. A LESSON GIVEN TO THE DISCIPLES ON BROTHERLY CHARITY

(Luke 9: 49, 50)

Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, verse 49a. These were the words of John to Jesus. The disciples felt that since this man was not of their number; that is, not formally attached to their group, he had no right to use the name of Christ in rebuking evil spirits. Dr. Meyer remarks in this connection "that outside the company of the disciples of Jesus there were, even then, men in whose hearts his teaching and acts had evoked a higher and even a supernatural power which had fallen here and there beyond the little circle of his own, kindled flames occasionally away from the central fire." Doubtless some spark of jealousy was present in the hearts of the Lord's followers over outsiders using the name of Jesus to cast out devils. Or did the disciples have this in mind: all true believers in Christ and in his wonderful power would surely be members of his number. At any rate, they expressed opposition to the stranger using their Master's name to drive away evil spirits. From their viewpoint this man had no right to such use of the Master's name. They had a feeling, possibly, that, "If receiving a little child in thy name is the same as receiving

thee, was it wrong for us to forbid one to cast out devils in thy name?"

Note Jesus' rebuke for their act. He said, **Forbid him not.** Do not interfere with anyone who is doing a good deed in my name. He that is not against me is for me; and he that is not against you is for you. Matthew says, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Ch. 12: 30). What Jesus was saying here is: do not hinder nor stop anyone from doing good in my name, but rather encourage him. Such may often be found faithful followers of Christ, and as such will be gladly accepted by him.

Is not this an important lesson for those who see nothing good beyond their own circle? There are some Christians today that see things in this way. But the cause of righteousness must not be narrowed to our own church affiliation or creed. On the other hand, we are to accept and commend righteous deeds in others wherever and whenever practiced. Christianity embraces more than sectarianism or party groups. Christ's Gospel is for everyone who will accept it on the principles of his teaching. It has no place for the narrow-minded religionist—one who will have no fellowship with the person who differs with him in doctrine, or is not a member of his church. The plan of salvation was not given to man upon such narrow basis. Christ said, **Forbid him not.** Salvation is free! Let him, who will, teach and preach the good news. When a person is carrying the name of Jesus to troubled hearts, do not stop him, but let him be encouraged in the good work.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did the disciples forbid the stranger from casting out devils in Jesus' name? How did Christ rebuke his disciples? What is the teaching here relative to spreading the Gospel?

II. CHRIST'S SET PURPOSE AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE SAMARITANS

(Luke 9: 51-56)

He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. As the time was fast approaching for Jesus to be offered up, he set his heart upon going from Galilee to Jerusalem. He knew that his work was drawing to a close, and that his divine mission on earth would end at Jerusalem. Then would follow the resurrection, and after the forty days he would ascend to God in glory. He would be "received up." But he knew that before he would be received up he must be "offered up." He was ready to meet the awful tragedy of the cross. Thus, it is seen that Jesus was willing to give his life for the salvation of a sinful people. As the Lamb of God he was ready to be sacrificed on the altar for the sins of mankind. He viewed in advance what would take place in Jerusalem, how he would be betrayed, taken captive, brought before the Council, cruelly beaten and nailed to the cross. Yet, Christ was willing to suffer all these hardships that the world might be brought to God.

Christ sent messengers before him into Samaria. They went and entered into a village to make ready for him. These messengers made it known to the people of the village that Jesus was coming to be their guest. The Saviour of men is to be your guest of honor. How will you receive him? Will you make his short stay a most happy one?

May we imagine that the news was broken to these villagers with interest and great concern by these messengers. They were glad to bear the good news of so great a character as Jesus to spend a short while with these Samaritans. But how did they receive this news? What was their reaction or frame of mind?

(The student is to remember just here that the Samaritans had no dealings with

the Jews. Such had been a long standing custom. A spirit of animosity had prevailed through the years between these two peoples. In fact, the Jews, upon going into Galilee, usually took the longer route down by the Jordan to enter Galilee. However, we learn that Jesus, when he first went into Galilee, following his early Judean ministry, took the more direct route through Samaria.)

Now note here that the deep-rooted prejudice of these Samaritans immediately manifested itself when they learned that Jesus was on his way travelling through Samaria to Jerusalem. Thereupon, they refused to extend to him a cordial welcome and a royal entertainment. To them he would be no welcome guest. These villagers did not make ready and bestir themselves for the entrance of the blessed Son of God into their midst. No, they expressed a different attitude. They did not receive him. "Jesus went to another village."

Think how expressive this is of some people today concerning Christ and His Gospel message! Just as those villagers allowed their prejudice to prevent cordial reception of Christ in their town, so many people in this age do not want his Christian influence in their homes. There are some homes in this country in which the minister is not a welcome guest. Still others scorn religious workers, as they visit rural and urban homes, giving out Gospel tracts and selling religious literature. Remember, only a short time before the Lord's disciples were guilty of the same sort of thing by forbidding the stranger to do mighty works in the name of Jesus. Such attitude should not exist. Any home or town that does not welcome freely Christ and his good works cannot hope to have God's richest benedictions placed upon it. As Christ rebuked the disciples for their severe attitude toward the stranger, so

will he punish all who set themselves in the way to seek to carry his gospel.

Note now the bitter attitude of the disciples toward these Samaritan villagers for their rejection of Christ. When James and John saw this, they said, **Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?** verse 54. For their contempt, shall we not call down upon them the wrath of God? If they will not receive you into their town as a welcome guest, do they not deserve drastic punishment? We think they do deserve severe punishment for such treatment. But note again Christ's sharp rebuke. **Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.** You are showing a very bitter, revengeful spirit toward them. That is not the Christ-like spirit. You do not know what manner of spirit you are showing toward these people. I have not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. You are manifesting the spirit of destruction of human life. Your attitude is wrong. Are there not some people today who manifest this sort of spirit toward those whom they hate? Christ wants his followers to seek the lost and not to destroy them because they have opposed him. On this point, Dr. James R. Kaye says in *The Teacher's Guide*, "It is a spirit of revenge, improper feelings towards the Samaritans by which you are actuated, instead of proper feelings towards me." Christ was reviled but he reviled not back again."

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Christ desire to go to Jerusalem, knowing that he would soon be offered up? Ask a member of the class to discuss the attitude of the Samaritan villagers toward Christ's coming to their town. What was the disciples' desire concerning these villagers' rejection of Christ? How did Christ speak to them? What should be the Christian's attitude toward the opposers of Christ?

III. CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP

(Luke 9: 57-62)

Verses fifty-seven through sixty-two for study in this topic reveal some of the conditions of discipleship as set forth by Christ. The first instance is given of the man who came to Jesus and said, **Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.** Note, this **certain** man said, "I will follow thee." He raised no questions, nor offered any excuses. Moreover, he expressed perfect willingness to follow the Master. This was a declaration of discipleship. As a parallel thought let us note here what the prophet Isaiah said, upon hearing the voice of the Lord in the vision: "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6: 8b). He was willing to obey the vision of God. St. Matthew states that this certain man was a scribe, and that Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8: 20). Jesus meant, let us think, to inform this scribe that, in his following him in carrying the Gospel, he had no home, no restful place here on earth, in which he may lie down and rest his weary body after periods of toil and great exertion. In fact, the work of bearing the Gospel in the midst of bitter opposers to Christianity is not an easy one, and Christ would have this man to know that he had no abiding place here. As Dr. James R. Kaye puts it, "You will be following a man who has less of an abiding place than the foxes and the birds." In your following me, you will find it to be the way of hardship and privation. Are you willing to share my poverty? Are you willing to follow the way that leads to the cross, and not to an earthly home? Think well, and have no mistaken ideas concerning me and the meaning of true discipleship. The would-be-followers of Jesus today may draw a good lesson from this point.

In the second instance Jesus extended the call to discipleship to a certain indi-

vidual. Said he, **Follow me.** But the man replied, **Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.** In the first case, the man proposed that he enter the Lord's service without delay, but in this case Jesus made the call to a man who made at once a request which would seem to some to have been a fair reason for not immediately following Jesus. But note the Master's words, **Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God,** verse 60b. Remember, the man did not refuse to accept the call, but he had a reason for delaying that acceptance until he could bury his father. But others could have buried his father. "The Lord's need, the Lord's call, sets the private and domestic claims aside."—**The Pulpit Commentary.** Hence, we have the strange reply of Christ in the words, "Let the dead bury their dead." "Thou hast neighbors, brethren, who have not received the life that is pulsing in thee; to them may be left such a charge as that which thou hast named. But thou, with that life in thee, hast something else to do."—**The Pulpit Commentary.** Moreover, this may have been the way which Jesus had to test the seriousness of this man's attachment to him. Does true discipleship mean more to you than any earthly thing? Even in the midst of trying circumstances, does following Christ have the first claim upon one's attention? It should have according to what Jesus told this man. Laboring for Christ is the greatest work in the world and his followers should place it first.

Go thou and preach the kingdom of God. This is of greater importance than burying the dead, even though it is your father. Your friends and loved ones, who could do that as well as you, have not this call to preach the kingdom of God. The divine call must take the first place in this matter. The truth as taught here is this: nothing should hinder or delay a God-called person from preaching the

gospel to lost souls. But the Lord's work is often set aside and secondary matters attended to first. How often it is that Christ and his kingdom work are crowded out of the lives of some people!

In the third case, the man said to Christ, **Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.** This man, like the second had something to be done first. His reason for delay appears less valid than that of the second man. He wanted to say farewell to the loved ones at home first, then he would be ready to follow Christ. As in the case of the second man, he was placing Christ and the gospel second in importance. Here, again, Christ was bringing to the test the sincerity and readiness of this man to enter his divine service without delay. This third man said he was willing, but not now. Give me a little time to say "good-bye" to my people and I will go. But note Christ's reply, **No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God,** verse 62b. What Christ had reference to is the fact that, when a man leaves the world for Christ and his service, he must not turn back to his former sinful habits. No man is fit for the kingdom who looks back upon what he has left, but his love for God and righteousness must come first in his life. Remember, Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. If Christ does not come first, there is no full surrender of one's love for the kingdom. If parents, sisters and brothers, houses and lands must be considered first, then one is not fit for the kingdom of God. True discipleship must be full and free, taking first place in the life of the child of God. A full surrender must be made for Jesus. "If discipleship could be less than this, then salvation would be less than what God has declared it to be."—**J. R. Kaye, The Teacher's Guide.**

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What reply did Jesus make to the first man who told him that he would follow him? Why did Jesus tell the second man to go and preach the gospel before he had time to bury his father? What was the third man's excuse for delay, and how did Je-

sus answer him? What is Jesus' answer today to those who raise excuses to put his work second?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Faithfulness—the Essence of Christianity.—Ruth 1: 6-22; Matt. 25: 14-30; II Tim. 4: 1-8.

Lesson Ten for Sunday, December 8, 1940

A Good Neighbor

(Luke 10: 25-37)

Golden Text: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. Luke 10: 27.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 10:

25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a

certain priest that way; and when he saw him passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil, and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 29.

Place: Judea.

Persons: Christ, the young lawyer and others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 19: 16; 22: 35.

T.—Lev. 19: 18; Deut. 6: 5.

W.—Lev. 18: 5; Nehemiah 9: 29.

T.—Eze. 20: 11, 13; Rom. 10: 5.

F.—Lev. 16: 15.

S.—Jno. 4: 9-11.

S.—Lu. 9: 52, 53; Acts 10: 28.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson is an exposition of the teaching which Christ gave to a certain lawyer who came to him for religious advice. The study strikes directly at the heart of salvation. The duties involved upon an individual to become a child of God are plainly stated by Christ to the young lawyer. A person's love to God and to his fellow-man is the central theme of the scripture text, and salvation is represented as the ultimate goal of the human heart. Thus, the quest for eternal life must be sought through the study of the scripture, and obtained by obedience to God's holy Word.

I. THE LAWYER'S QUESTION AND CHRIST'S ANSWER

(Luke 10: 25-28)

Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? This certain lawyer admitted by his own question his lost condition. He also recognized the fact that he needed to do something about the salvation of his soul. What more vital question can anyone ask? Is it not true that spiritual condition must be met before salvation is experienced? This lawyer was evidently interested in his salvation, or else he would not have asked the question. Salvation is a personal matter, and every unsaved person should ask himself this question: What must I do to be saved?

Christ replied, **What is written in the law?** What do the Scriptures say? How do they read? Go to the law for the answer to your question. Since you have

studied the Scriptures, tell me what they have to say about it. The young lawyer quoted the right passages from the Old Testament. (See Lev. 19: 18; Deut. 6: 5). These passages which he quoted state plainly the duty of man to God and to his fellow-man. It was the question of love to God and to man. Man must love God with his whole heart, soul, strength, and mind. He must love his neighbor as he would like for his neighbor to love him. Christ said, **This do, and thou shalt live.** If you will obey the commandments, you shall receive eternal life. It is your duty to live a life of love to God and man to be able to reap the heavenly reward.

As a parallel with this thought, let us remember that the Philippian jailer asked the apostle Paul the same question: "What must I do to be saved?" Paul's reply was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." In both cases, let us note, the two men asked what must be done for one to obtain eternal life. It is true that Christ fulfilled, completed the atoning work for our salvation on the cross, but the person who wilfully neglects to meet the conditions of salvation will be lost. According to the terms of the Gospel, man can accept or reject salvation. But it is man's duty to exercise faith in the saving power of Christ. He must repent, accept Christ as his personal Savior, and be a true follower of God before he can be assured of eternal life. To do this he will manifest his love for God and for his fellow-men.

On the authority of Jesus' words, all who live and act according to the requirements of these two statements are meeting the conditions for eternal life. This means that the person who has come into the saving relations with God, and loves him with his whole heart, as stated by the lesson text, and has manifested the attitude of love for his neighbor has become a child of God. He cannot love

God with his whole heart without loving others. Christ said, **This do, and thou shalt live.** Love for God and for our fellow-men is the test. The young lawyer was asked to meet these two conditions. Remember, love for God is not enough. One must have proper regard for others. "He who hateth his brother is not fit for the kingdom of God." It is natural for a true child of God to hate sin committed by his neighbor, but to hold malice and hatred in his heart against this neighbor would render him unfit for the kingdom of God. We are told that love driveth out all hatred, strife and malice from the heart. Christ loved the sinner, but not his sins. He gave himself for the sins of the world. He was lifted up that all men might be drawn unto him. We are to manifest the Christ-like spirit of love for our neighbor, as is enjoined upon everyone by God's holy Word.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did the lawyer ask Christ the question concerning his soul salvation? Why did Christ refer the lawyer to the Law? How does the Philippian jailer's question to Paul compare with this question to Christ? Ask a member of the class to discuss the two-fold love as a means by which one may obtain eternal life.

II. THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, "WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?"

(Luke 10: 29-37)

The young lawyer asked Jesus the question, **Who is my neighbor?** He raised no question about God, nor did he call in question God's claims upon his love. But, to love his neighbor as himself, this young man considered that a different matter. Immediately came to his mind the question, **Who is my neighbor?** I love the members of my family. I love those of my intimate friends who love me. But, **Who is to be considered as my neighbor whom I should love as I love myself?** Should this love extend to

strangers, to people in whom I have no personal interest? He was not settled in his mind upon the scriptural meaning of the term "neighbor." Many young people today consider those living closest to them as their neighbors, regardless of friendly or unfriendly relations with them, but Christ placed a different conception on the term "neighbor."

I. Christ Answered the Question with an Example:

Christ frequently taught spiritual truths by means of parables and concrete examples. So, in this case, he related the story of the certain man who, on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, was attacked by the thieves. Not only did the thieves have no love, no feeling, for this traveller, but they purposely assaulted him for his personal effects. They were out for gain any way they could get it. They beat him, robbed him of his possessions, and left him half dead. Note, a certain priest came by later, and when he saw him, he went by without offering help. A Levite came along, and upon seeing the wounded man lying on the ground, he looked upon him. But he went on his way without offering any assistance. Thus they, though men of religious bearing, manifested no desire to help the wounded man. They showed no love in their hearts for this poor traveller. This fact is distinctly indicated in the parable. Here was a fine opportunity for real Christian service, but the priest and the Levite failed to make use of it. On the other hand, Did not the unfortunate man have a right to expect that men in their religious position would readily and freely give him, or anyone in a similar plight, assistance? We believe he did. How often Christian people do let good opportunities for real service pass unnoticed!

But, note now the attitude of the Samaritan who was travelling that way. The priest and the Levite, in passing by

the suffering man on the road, passed by duty, while the good Samaritan quickly felt his sense of duty and readily gave assistance to the beaten traveller. He had compassion upon him. He manifested the humanitarian spirit of love. Note further that it is inferred that the man beaten by the robbers was a Jew, and also, as was brought out in a previous lesson, that the Samaritans had no dealings with the Jews; but here is a case of a Samaritan doing what the Levite and the priest failed to do. Remember, will you just here, the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well? As Jesus administered to her spiritual needs so this good Samaritan administered to this man's physical needs. Note further how this good Samaritan stands out in striking contrast to the priest and the Levite: they showed the lack of love for humanity by ignoring their Christian duty, whereas the Samaritan expressed his compassionate love for one in distress by his Christian act.

Now, let us note the four things which he did in the behalf of the sufferer: (1) he took the time to give him relief, regardless as to his own business affairs or much pressing duties; (2) he gave him the use of his beast of burden, however badly he might have needed him for himself; (3) he secured for him comfortable lodging and medical care at the inn, thus placing him in the hands of those who could look after him; and (4) he paid the bills. What more humane act could he have done to anyone? What a wonderful act of Christian love and care! Such servants of the Lord today are to be praised for acts of Christian service similar to this of the good Samaritan.

2. The Only Possible Answer:

After Jesus had finished relating the story, he asked this lawyer this question, **Which now of these, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?** Now that I have plainly stated

to you this incident, Which one of the three men do you think was neighbor to the wounded man? You can judge for yourself. The lawyer could give but one reasonable answer to that question—**He that shewed mercy on him.** He knew the other two men could not be given credit for a neighborly act when they had neglected their Christian duty. No, they had done nothing for the wounded man to accredit them as being his neighbors. After citing the case and showing the conduct of the three men, remember how Jesus left it to this young lawyer to answer his own question. Note how simply and effectively Jesus met the young man's inquiry. May we imagine Christ having said this to the lawyer, "If you love the Lord your God as stated in Deuteronomy 6: 5, you will love your neighbor as has been stated in Leviticus 19: 18." **Go, and do thou likewise.** "Your neighbor will be any man regardless of race, color or condition to whom you can render a service."—**James R. Kaye.** Yes, one's true love for God will find an expression of itself by his loving others. Jesus made plain to the young lawyer that knowing must be applied in the doing before the proper reward is to be assured. Now, that you know who a neighbor is, go and be a neighbor unto your fellow-men. When you have fulfilled during your life-time these two commandments, you can rest assured of your heavenly reward, for "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22: 40).

"See, then, what this pure self-love, which is the measure of love to the neighbor, represents. It represents a **power of sacrifice.** 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.'"—**The Pulpit Commentary.** "Behold, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4: 7). "If a man say, I love God,

and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4: 20, 21).

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Whom does the average person consider as his neighbor? What purpose did the lawyer have in mind in asking Jesus the ques-

tion, Who is my neighbor? How did Christ answer the question? Why did the lawyer say the Samaritan was the neighbor to the wounded traveller? Have a member of the class to state the lesson as given here concerning the modern Christian's duty of neighborliness.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Rendering Service to Others.—Acts 9: 36-42; Acts 16: 6-18, 25-34; Jonah 3: 1-10; Acts 10: 1-48.

Lesson Eleven for Sunday, December 15, 1940

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray

(Luke 11: 1-13)

Golden Text: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Luke 11: 9.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 11:

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we all so forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him:

7 And he from within shall answer and

say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot arise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: A. D. 29.

Place: Judea.

Persons: Jesus and His disciples.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 6: 9; Ch. 26: 39, 42.

T.—Ps. 103: 20, 21; Ac. 21: 14.

W.—Matt. 7: 7; Mk. 11: 24.

T.—Jno. 15: 7; I Jno. 3: 22.

F.—Jno. 14: 13; Jas. 1: 5, 6.

S.—Matt. 7: 7-11.

S.—Jno. 15: 16.

THE INTRODUCTION

The student will note that, following the incident of lesson ten in which Jesus gave the instruction to the young lawyer, he went to the little town of Bethany, and into the home of Martha and Mary. The student will also recall the story of Martha who sought to enlist the help of Jesus on this occasion that he might advise Mary to render Martha greater assistance in the domestic affairs.

This lesson in which Jesus taught his disciples the great need of prayer falls between the incident at Martha's home and the annual Feast of Dedication which was held in December, beginning on the 15th day and continuing for eight days.

This the eleventh chapter of Luke's Gospel is remarkable for the way in which it sets forth the pre-eminence of Christ. He is represented here as the Great Teacher of mankind in the matter of how man may best approach God. St. Luke accounts Jesus greater than Jonah the prophet, or Solomon the king—superior to all the religious teachers of all time. The thought contained in the Lord's Prayer is the central theme of this lesson.

I. THE PRAYING CHRIST

(Lu. 11: 1)

It is striking to note that Christ frequently prayed to the heavenly Father. We have here the account of his **praying in a certain place**. If he, who could heal the sick, feed the multitude in a miraculous way, and cast out deamons, felt the

need of praying to God, What about the need of prayer on the part of people today? This **certain place** where Christ prayed was probably where he had been accustomed to pray often.

May we note here some of the instances of Christ's praying. When he was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan, he prayed to God (Luke 3: 2). Remember, when he went into the wilderness, he prayed (Luke 5: 16). On another occasion he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer (Luke 6: 12). Note again that as he was transfigured on the mountain in the presence of Peter, James and John, he prayed (Luke 9: 28, 29). He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane that night before his betrayal, and on the cross the next day before his death. Thus, Christ the only begotten Son of God manifested the prayer-life during the eventful period of his earthly ministry.

It is not certain whether Christ was alone, or whether his disciples were with him in this **certain place** on this occasion. It is probable, however, that they were with him at this particular time, for **when he had ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples**, verse 1b. We are to remember that his disciples were present on different occasions when Christ entered into prayer unto God.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask different members of the class to quote references of Christ's prayers as cited in this topic. Have also different members of the class to state the intent and purposes of some of Christ's prayers.

II. THE LORD'S PRAYER, OR THE MODEL PRAYER

(Lu. 11: 2-4)

Note first the request which Christ's disciple's asked of him: **Lord, teach us to pray**. What is prayer? One writer has said,

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air."

Prayer is the petition arising from the heart of a Christian unto his God, entreating his forgiveness and tender mercies. Sincere prayer is the communion of an earnest heart, in act and purpose, with its God. It is, in other words, the sacred tie that binds the soul of the Christian closely to the heavenly Father in spiritual relationship.

1. Personal Acknowledgment of God:

Our Father which art in heaven. This first expression is an acknowledgment of God as our heavenly Father, and that his abode is in heaven. No one can offer this prayer from the heart unless he has the consciousness of God as his eternal Father. The Father in heaven is addressed in the opening words of this prayer. Christ desired that his disciples offer their prayers up to God. May we think his disciples desired a rule or model by which they might pray, thus making their prayers personal and direct to the supreme Being. Let us note the following quotation on prayer:

"Lord, teach me what it is to pray; Lord, excite and quicken me to the duty; Lord, direct me what to pray for; Lord, give me praying graces, that I may serve God acceptably in prayer; Lord, teach me to pray in proper words; give me a mouth and wisdom in prayer, that I may speak as I ought; teach me what I should say."—*Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. V.*

The disciples recognized God as a personal God, and Jesus Christ as his only begotten Son. All true Christians acknowledge God as the heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. It is to be understood that prayer is to be addressed to God as the merciful Creator of human life. In prayer God is the One, the infinite Being, to whom

everyone should go with his petitions, asking for mercy and forgiveness, and offering up to him thanksgivings of praise for his manifold blessings.

2. God Recognized as the Hallowed Father:

The true child of God approaches him in reverent prayer, expressing joy and gladness of his majesty, glory and holiness. The penitent soul is keenly conscious of the fact that it is his coming into God's presence for holy communion with him in the attitude of sincere prayer that counts most. Therefore, he feels deeply this thought: **Hallowed be thy name.** Hence, the Christian senses, in the approach to prayer, the holiness, the supreme affection which God the heavenly Father has for his children. People are to approach God in prayer in this attitude. As God is holy, they should come into his presence with reverence and deep spiritual worship at the throne of grace.

3. Prayer for God's Kingdom to Come:

Thy kingdom come. The disciples were to pray that God's kingdom might come in the hearts and lives of the people. This thought was to have been foremost in the disciples' minds when they prayed. Pray that God's kingdom may be witnessed, yes, planted in the hearts of the people, for the coming of the kingdom of God is the paramount thing. People today need to pray always for the coming of God's kingdom. Remember how Christ said in his Sermon on the Mount, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Salvation is the first important thing to be sought. But do we give the kingdom of God its rightful place when we go to prayer? Do we pray earnestly for the coming of God's kingdom in the hearts of unsaved souls more than we do for our own selves? In this thought of the coming of God's kingdom, Christ meant to emphasize the need of sincere prayer on the part of every Christian for God's king-

dom to come that men and women might be saved. People everywhere need to be saved. But, Is it not the fact that too many people are inclined in their prayers to get too quickly to themselves, to their needs and desires, and place them before God, rather than first entreating God for the good of others? Remember, Jesus opened this prayer—The Model Prayer—with these three basic things: the Fatherhood of God, the hallowed character of God, and the coming of the kingdom of God. Had this not been the true order of this prayer, Jesus would not have stated it so for his disciples and others to use as a model. Certainly, God's children should pray for the coming of his kingdom first.

4. Prayer for God's Will to Be Done on Earth:

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6: 10). Following the thought of praying for the coming of God's kingdom, Jesus directed his disciples to this thought: pray that the heavenly Father's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is a continuation of the preceding petitions. "Father, let thy name be sanctified and glorified, and thy kingdom prevail, and thy will be done on the earth that is now alienated from thy service, as it is in yonder heaven that is entirely devoted to thy service."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary**, Vol. V. Dr. James R. R. Kaye says, "God's kingdom will come in God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven." It will be done only as we as individuals order our lives, become fully submissive to God's Holy Spirit, and operate under the requirements of this petition. For God's will to be wholly operative in the world, people must declare their purpose to be obedient to the will of God, and then live in strict accordance with his holy will. Remember what the psalmist has said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66: 18). Obedience to

God's will on the part of all Christians will help to bring about the coming of God's will among the people of the earth. All Christians should not only pray that God's will be done on the earth, but also they should seek, through their untiring religious services, to bring it to pass.

5. Our Dependence upon God:

Give us day by day our daily bread. Here we have the petition for daily support. In this Model Prayer, if our first petitions be that God's name may be sanctified, his kingdom come, and that his will be done on earth, we may then come freely to the throne of grace, asking God for our daily bread. Thus, "When we first have been sanctified to God, our daily bread will then be sanctified to us." Devout men teach that we should pray daily. In this part of the prayer, it is plainly stated that the petitioner is asking for temporal blessings. We believe it is meant that the petitioner is to ask God for the necessary things of life, as food, shelter, raiment. Some Bible scholars think that it means "our necessary bread, that bread that is suited to the cravings of our nature, the fruit that is brought out of the earth for our bodies that are made of the earth and are earthly," (See Ps. 104: 14).

Whatever we receive that is good is given to us by the heavenly Father. Dr. James R. Kaye explains this point thus: "He hands us our bread in the form of wholesome, constructive work and opportunity, natural resources, the soil to till, the sunshine and rain, health and strength, the things that contribute to well-being, comfort and happiness, the working out and development of selfhood—all of which is "daily bread."—**The Teacher's Guide**.

6. Prayer for Spiritual Blessings:

In this life of the flesh sin has entered down the ages into the hearts of men. Man, living in sin and under such condi-

tions of wickedness as exist on the earth, needs to seek pardon at the throne of grace. **Forgive us our sins.** This petition is a request for pardon of our transgressions. Think how wonderfully God has made, through his only begotten Son, the provision for our salvation! It is through Christ on the cross that redemption may be obtained for all who will seek pardon and manifest faith in the Son of God. If we are to receive forgiveness at the throne of grace, we must exercise the forgiving spirit toward our fellow-men. In this connection, St. Matthew renders it thus: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Ch. 6: 12). We cannot conscientiously pray to God for pardon until we manifest this attitude of forgiveness toward those who have harmed us.

As stated by Matthew, let us note Jesus' words following the Lord's Prayer: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Ch. 6: 14, 15). Thus it is shown that the petitioner must manifest the forgiving spirit toward his fellow-men if he is to be pardoned for his trespasses against the heavenly Father.

Remember, God does not lead us into committing sin. He may try us and allow us to be tempted by the Devil, as Job of old, but he does not cause us to sin. Satan does that. James says in chapter one, verses 13 and 14: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Note again the petitioner's plea, "But deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6: 13). This is a request that God may not try us beyond our strength, for God does try us, we believe, as he tried Abraham. This petition is that we may be delivered from

the evil one, and that we may not be overcome by Satan's temptations. It is a prayer for personal strength and divine guidance that the powers of Satan may not have dominion over a person's life. If for any reason God should allow us to be tempted severely, we are to pray for strength and support; and ask that he not suffer us to be led into sinning by Satan's alluring snares. Since God is greater than Satan, he is able to shield and to guard us from the evil one if we will be guided by his divine instructions.

Again, the student of the Bible should decide for himself to refrain from being led by Satan into evil paths. It is very necessary that everyone should resist temptations and evil influences. Have a strong will to withstand evil enticements. Take a stand against such and say "No" to all calls of Satan. People should stand firmly on God's holy word. They should not allow others of evil practices to draw them into sinful paths and corrupt living. They are to ask God to lead them into paths of righteousness and holy living. He will shield them, not tempt them; he will free them, and not ensnare them in evil and crooked ways.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS: In the Lord's Prayer why should God be addressed first by the petitioner? Why should God's name be hallowed? Why should Christians pray that God's kingdom come? How may God's will be done on earth? Ask for discussion on this point. What is meant by one praying for "daily bread"? Let this point be discussed by the class. How are we to pray for pardon and spiritual blessings? What is the twofold aspect of "forgiveness" as brought out by Matthew 6: 14, 15?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Reward through Asking, Seeking, Knocking.—Lu. 11: 5-13; Matt. 7: 7-14; Jno. 15: 7-13; 1 Jno. 3: 21-24.

Lesson Twelve for Sunday, December 22, 1940

Sharing the Shepherds' Joy

(Luke 2: 8-20)

Golden Text: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2: 14.

THE PRINTED TEXT*(Authorized Version)***Luke 2:**

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: B. C. 4, or the winter 4 to 5 B. C.

Place: Bethlehem, from five to six miles south of Jerusalem.

Persons: The shepherds, the angels, Mary and the child Jesus.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Lu. 24: 47; Gen. 12: 3.

T.—Matt. 28: 19; Mk. 1: 15.

W.—Col. 1: 23; Matt. 1: 16; Ac. 2: 36.

T.—Phil. 2: 11.

F.—Dan. 7: 10; Heb. 1: 14.

S.—Rev. 5: 11; Rom. 5: 1; Eph. 2: 17.

S.—Col. 1: 20; Lu. 1: 66.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson opens with the scene of the shepherds in the fields keeping watch

over their flocks through the night. Heaven's message of peace, joy and hope was brought to them by the angel, who in shining brightness, told them of the birth of the Christ in Bethlehem.

The sudden appearance of the heavenly host, singing praises to God, filled the shepherds with amazement and great concern about the babe born in Bethlehem. It was a great announcement of the coming of God's only begotten Son on earth. When the shepherds had gone

and seen the babe lying in the manger, they returned glorifying God. Great wonder came upon all that heard of the birth of the promised Savior.

I. THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL

(Lu. 2: 8, 9)

God sent his angel to the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks in the field near Bethlehem. This angel appeared to them in the night. These shepherds were humble men to whom God made known his greatest news to a sin-cursed world. They were watchmen of the night, guarding their flocks from all possible attacks of robbers and ferocious beasts. God had a purpose, let us think, in sending his angel to these humble men to announce the great news of the birth of Jesus to a wicked world.

Note now the scene. **The glory of the Lord shone round about them.** This glory of God symbolized the divine presence of the Lord. Mystery and wonder gripped these lowly shepherds as they beheld the glory of the Lord.

"They saw and heard the glory of the Lord round about them; such as made the night as bright as day, such a glory as used to attend God's appearances, a heavenly glory, or an exceedingly great glory, such as they could not bear the dazzling luster of."—Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. V.

Remember, this visible token of the presence of the Eternal God appeared to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3: 2-4); it guided the children of Israel in their desert-wanderings; and it was seen in the tabernacle and in the Temple. On the Mount of Transfiguration it shone round Christ (Matt. 17: 1-7). It appeared in great brightness to Paul on the road outside Damascus (Ac. 9: 3-7).

They were amazed and fear came upon them. God's messenger, coming upon

them in the late hours of the night, and with the glory of the Lord shining in their presence, caused these shepherds to tremble and fear greatly the strange appearance of the heavenly sight. They had not been warned of his coming nor as to his purpose in coming to them. "This made them sore afraid, and put them in a great consternation, as fearing some evil things." "The terror felt by the shepherds was the natural awe ever felt by man when brought into visible communion with the dwellers of the so-called spirit world."—The Pulpit Commentary.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the appearance of the angel to the shepherds. How were they affected by the angel's appearance? Describe, (1) the appearance of God's glory to Moses in the burning bush, (2) on the Mount of Transfiguration in the presence of Peter James and John, and (3) to the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus.

II. THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE

(Lu. 2: 10-12)

The angel said, **Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.** It was perfectly natural for the shepherds to have been strangely moved by this supernatural manifestation of God's glory. They readily knew that it was not an earthly scene. They felt that it was something of the divine presence of the infinite Being which was shining about them. Thus, they were sore afraid. At times people have become afraid of some unusual phenomenon appearing in the sky. But the angel, seeing their great fear, immediately assured them that good tidings of great joy was in store for them. Their fear was to be changed to great joy, for the angel had a message of good tidings for them. It was a glorious message. He told them that it was not a fearful, but a joyful thing that had occurred. The angel was preparing their minds to receive this good mes-

sage by entreating them not to be afraid. The good news—the gospel news—will remove your fear. That is true in most cases, for when a person has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus on the cross, he then loves God instead of fearing him.

Note, the angel spoke directly the good news to the shepherds in these words, **Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.** This is news direct from heaven. This day, not some days ago, but this day was the holy One born. This child was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. You will find him there wrapped in swaddling clothes. He is lying in a manger. He is the promised One. He is the Messiah, the Anointed One mentioned in the Old Testament prophecies. He is now actually here to become the Saviour of men.

What effect did this message have upon the shepherd's? Such a wonderful message from heaven gripped the shepherd's minds, aroused their feelings of joy, and gave them the happy desire to hasten to see the Christ child. They must now go and see for themselves the child Jesus lying in the manger. Think what joy they must have experienced upon hearing this message! How wonderful it is that God can reveal his mysteries to the hearts of simple men. These lowly shepherds believed the angel's story of the great event. There was no doubting nor questioning in their minds or among themselves as to the truth and meaning of the angel's message, for they said one to another, **Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass,** verse 15b. They heard and believed, then went and witnessed the birth of the child Jesus.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the angel's message to the shepherds? How did they receive the message?

III. THE HEAVENLY HOST

(Luke 2: 13-14)

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. Note, the heavenly host appeared suddenly, and they were singing praises to God. "Thousands of angels appeared, filling the expanse of the sky. All of this indeed for only a handful of poor shepherds!"—R. C. H. Lenski. This heavenly music filled the shepherd's hearts with inexpressible joy. They, no doubt, were held spellbound for the moments at the ringing of the glorious anthem in their ears,

**Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, good will
toward men.**

"It is the heavenly introduction of God's Son to the world, and the event is such in its divine character to bring forth the heavenly multitude to praise God and to speak peace on earth in the birth of the Prince of Peace."—Dr. James R. Kaye. This heavenly anthem suggests, let us believe, that heaven and earth were united; that is, the blessed Son of God had come as the incarnate One to draw fallen man back to the heavenly fold of God.

This announcement of "peace on earth, and good will to men" came to earth by the heavenly host who proclaimed in the heavenly anthem to the shepherds that the promised Redeemer had come. They chanted this message of peace as a joyous token of the coming King. It is true that the coming of Jesus was to announce the reign of the gospel of peace among men. But this peace "among men in whom he is well pleased" has not yet been established in the hearts of all people. Men have talked of peace through the centuries, but universal peace has not been established on the earth. Some think that peace will come by the exercise of good will—living the clean life, and holding to high ideals and practicing

good morals. Doing these things will not bring universal peace to mankind. There can come no lasting peace on earth except it shall come "among men in whom God is well pleased." Moreover, God cannot be "well pleased" with a soul living in vile wickedness. That soul must first repent of his sins, accept Christ and be saved before God can be well pleased with him. Not by good deeds nor by high ideals can anyone or any set of men bring peace on earth. Universal peace must come through the shed blood of Christ on Calvary. There he paid the price for peace, and before the world can have universal peace, it must come to Christ in penitence and be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Not by the cunning craftiness of men, and not by armed might embattled in a struggle for peace, nor by any system of education or cultural refinement by any set of people may it be obtained, but the world coming to the foot of the cross and accepting Jesus as the Redeemer, the Prince of Peace.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask a member of the class to describe the coming of the heavenly host before the shepherds. What will be necessary for the coming of universal peace? What part should Christians manifest in helping to bring about universal peace on earth?

IV. THE RESPONSE OF THE SHEPHERDS

(Luke 2: 15-18)

And they came with haste. With one purpose in their hearts, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem. They were interested to see the new-born King. It must have been a very great joy to their hearts when they found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. Think what awe, mingled with overwhelming joy, that came over them when they looked upon the child Jesus lying there in that lowly place!

Not in the inn nor in some comfortable home in Bethlehem was he born, but in the stable. Let us note in this connection what Dr. James R. Kaye has had to say: "The stable in Palestine is frequently a part of the house, fitted up for cattle. The manger is in the form of a box made of stones and mortar." It has been true in the passing of time that many a child, born of humble birth, has become great in the annals of history.

Note, When they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. They were happy to break the good news to others. They experienced great joy in telling the people that Christ was born in Bethlehem. "Thus, these men, at the bottom of the scale in Israel, were chosen as the first preachers of the new-born King."—*The Pulpit Commentary*.

All they that heard it wondered at those things, verse 18a. When this strange story was noised abroad in the city, the people were amazed. Doubtless, many believed it not at first, while others pondered over the wonderful event that had come to pass in their own town. Could it be possible that the promised Child should be born in Bethlehem? How wonderful for the prince of Peace to be born in such an humble place! Nevertheless, it was true. Some of the most humble people of earth have been chosen by the Almighty to carry his divine messages. God can use the simple, as well as the great, to tell the truths of his wonderful love. These lowly shepherds told their story which caused many to rejoice over the event, the birth of Jesus, that many had longed to see to come to pass.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What is significant about the shepherds hastening to see the Christ child? Describe the "making known abroad the saying" by the shepherds. How were the people, to whom they told the story, moved?

V. THE SILENT MOTHER

(Luke 2: 19)

Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. When the shepherds told the people what had taken place, the people wondered; but Mary took the matter to heart more seriously. She was quiet, considering it all too sacred, too miraculous for her to express in words. What she felt was deeper than words could express.

"The notion of the participle 'pondering' is that of throwing things together, comparing, letting one explain and add to another."—R. C. H. Lenski. From this verse of scripture we get a glimpse of the depth of Mary's character. She is calm and deep, manifesting the deep spiritual nature. Yet, she is strong, steady, and preserving the balance of gentle graces. She controls her emotions in an hour of greatest rejoicing. Let us think she recalled with deep feeling Ga-

briel's great annunciation, sometime before, how she would become the mother of the Son of God. She knew the hand of God was upon her with the blessing that no other one could ever share. To her it was a time of deep pondering and sacred meditation over the fulfillment of God's own will. No other person in all the world could feel as she felt. No one could search out the deep impulses of her soul, and know the rejoicings of her heart. Such were too great for words to express.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: How did the people feel concerning the great news that the Saviour was born? What was Mary's attitude, or how did she express herself?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Some Old Testament Prophecies Concerning the Coming King. Isa. 7: 14; 9:6, 7; Ps. 103: 20; 148: 2.

Lesson Thirteen for Sunday, December 29, 1940

Jesus Requires Faithfulness

(Luke 12: 35-48)

Golden Text: For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. Luke 12: 48b.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 12:

35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39 And this know, that if the Goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that

faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46 The lord of that servant will come

in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

The Setting of the Lesson

Time: All the events of this chapter occurred in November and December, A. D. 29.

Place: Perea.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples, and the people.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 25: 1; Eph. 6: 14; I Pet. 1: 13.

T.—Matt. 24: 43, 46.

W.—I Thess 5: 2; II Pet. 3: 10.

T.—Matt. 24: 44; Mk. 13: 33.

F.—I Thess. 5: 6.

S.—Matt. 24: 45; 25: 21.

S.—I Cor. 4: 2.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson has as its chief purpose the study of faithfulness, or preparedness for the second coming of the Lord. The printed text contains Christ's discourse to his disciples on the necessity of being ready for his second coming and for the coming judgment. In this discourse, he spoke in the way of parable or figurative speech, giving illustrations as examples for the teaching of his spiritual truths concerning watchfulness and faithfulness for the coming of the Lord.

The application is for everyone to be prepared for that great day of the Lord. Christ meant the teaching to be accepted by all, and that no one neglect the opportunity of salvation. Those entrusted with responsible duties; for example, ministers of the gospel and servants of

the Lord, are expected to attend to the Lord's business until he returns.

I. PREPAREDNESS FOR THE LORD'S RETURN (Luke 12: 35-40)

1. Death, the Common Lot of All:

Death to the body is the common lot of everyone. The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes said, "All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Ch. 3: 20). God said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3: 19). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews said, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Ch. 9: 27). God has given to us a temporal body, which lasts only for a term of years, and then goes back to mother earth.

"At death Christ comes to us in sacred summons. In life God's voice should be daily heard saying, 'Put out those powers; use those opportunities; cultivate that spiritual nature I have entrusted to thee; serve thy brethren; glorify my Name.' But at death Christ comes to us and summons us to his presence; then we hear him say, 'Give account of thy stewardship.'"—The Pulpit Commentary.

2. All to Be Ready:

Remember, Christ spoke these words, those recorded in verses thirty-five through forty, to his disciples. The key-note is **PREPAREDNESS FOR THE LORD'S RETURN**. He meant to impress the fact upon his followers that all should be ready, having their loins girded, as Paul wrote the Ephesians, with the gospel truth, and their spiritual lights burning, for the second coming of the Lord. The time to prepare for anything worth while is in the immediate present. The only time that anyone has at his disposal is today. The writer to the Hebrews said, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Ch. 2: 3). Preparation for anything requires human action in the present time, not neglect or delay until some future date, but now. Men must live—abide in Christ Jesus—and be ever ready for the Lord's return. Jesus impressed this upon his disciples. "The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." No one knows when the Lord shall return to judge the quick (living) and the dead, therefore, the matter of salvation should not be neglected by anyone.

Note the illustration which Christ used in the next place. **Like men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding**, Jesus was telling his disciples to be ready for his second coming. Faithful servants are alert, waiting to open unto their master, **when he cometh and knocketh**. Jesus said, **Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching**. It is true that faithful servants are happy to see their lord when he returns from a long journey. When they have made ready everything and have waited long for his return, they receive unto themselves much joy for having been ready. So, Christ's followers, all who shall have been found ready, will be happy when he comes to gather up his jewels. Then he will make them to sit down to meat, and

will serve them. Remember, our Lord took the place of a servant (Phil. 2: 7), and ministered to the needs of sinful men. "As the lord will serve the servants, as stated by Christ in this illustration, so it will not be what we, the faithful ones, will do for him, but what he will do for us."—J. R. Kaye.

It is certain, whenever he comes, it will be in an hour that they think not. Matthew Henry has said, "It will be in the night, it will be far in the night, when he has long deferred his coming, and when many have done looking for him. In the second watch, just before midnight, or in the third watch, next after midnight," (verse 38).

Jesus made another illustration in this connection; namely, **If the goodman (master) of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched**. Thus, he would have been ready and waiting to protect his home. He would have guarded his property against all possible injury or loss. Here, again, comes the emphasis on preparedness. If it is right for men to protect and safeguard their material possessions, Should they not be all the more concerned about being prepared, as true children of God, for the Lord's second coming? Certainly they should. Jesus made it plain by this illustration that preparedness is the essential thing for eternal life.

Are there not too many people over the land today who are not manifesting this watching and waiting attitude? Is it not also true of many church members that they are negligent of waiting and watching for Jesus to return? Jesus wants us to watch and pray. If it were suddenly made known by the heavenly Father that Christ would return on a certain day in the very near future, thousands would be thrown into a panic. Instead of it being joyful news to them, it would be the most distracting thought

of their lives. They would realize their lost condition.

Christ said, **Be ye therefore ready.** "Ready" means being fully prepared. It means being in the Savior's keeping, the keeping of his commandments and abiding in his love. The truly redeemed child of God does not fear the coming of the Lord. He has nothing to fear if he is fully ready to meet his Savior. To be fully prepared is to have on the whole armor of God, as the apostle Paul stated in his epistle to the Ephesians 6: 11. A careful study of God's holy word will enable anyone to know what he is to do to be prepared for Christ's return; but unless he repents of his sins, makes a profession of faith in Jesus as his personal Savior and lives a Christian life, he will not be ready for that great day. Being a good student in the Sunday School class is praiseworthy; but becoming a true child of God, and being ready for the Lord's return, is the essential thing.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: What has the Bible had to say about death? What is the difference between death coming to the sinner and death coming to the saved person? What does it mean for one to be ready to die? Have someone to discuss Christian preparedness. Discuss Christ's teachings on this point.

II. THE TWO CLASSES OF SERVANTS

(Luke 12: 41-48)

Lord, speaketh thou this parable unto us, or even to all? Does it apply to us only, or does it apply to others? The apostle Peter, in reference to the foregoing illustration, called it a parable. He spoke of it as such, because it was not only figurative, but weighty, solid, and instructive. Peter here, as he was often accustomed to do, was spokesman for the disciples. To this question, Christ gave a direct answer, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mk. 13:

37). We should all take to ourselves what Christ in his holy word designs for us. We should, accordingly, inquire concerning his will toward us.

1. The Faithful Steward:

You will now study how Christ proceeded to describe the two classes of servants. Said he to his disciples, **Who then is that faithful and wise steward?** Note the emphasis on "faithful and wise." Christ's purpose in speaking by parable here, though not expressly so called, was to point out the manner of life and conduct which his followers should show toward his return. Thus, he used this parable of two servants to illustrate his spiritual teaching.

Now, what was their duty as stewards, and what was the trust committed to them? "They are made rulers of God's household, under Christ, whose own the house is."—**Matthew Henry.** The wise and faithful servant is rewarded by his master in being given the supervision of his household. His reward is his pay for his loyalty. It is denoted here that the faithful steward is the faithful Christian. As the faithful steward was to look after his lord's business and his servants to care for them, just so Christ's disciples, the ministers of his word, are to give God's children and the servants their portion of the spiritual meat, the "sincere milk of the work." Paul wrote to Timothy to be a good workman, a good minister of the gospel, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2: 15). Note that the steward was placed in a responsible position over the business of his lord. In like manner, let us think, every faithful Christian will be placed by the Master just where he can serve him best. Different Christians are able by means of different talents to serve the Lord in different capacities and to greater degrees of services, but the faithfulness will be the same. They will be duly rewarded in

the heavenly world for their loyalty to Christ. Remember, Christ's followers are to approve themselves **faithful and wise**.

Christ said, **Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing**, verse 43. His lord will make him ruler over all that he hath. He will be free to exercise himself, to enjoy himself in the master's estate. In like manner, the faithful child of God will be free to enjoy the good things when the Lord returns to gather up his jewels. Remember how Joseph obtained the preferment in Pharaoh's court in Egypt. He was faithful to the king.

2. The Evil and the Unfaithful Servant:

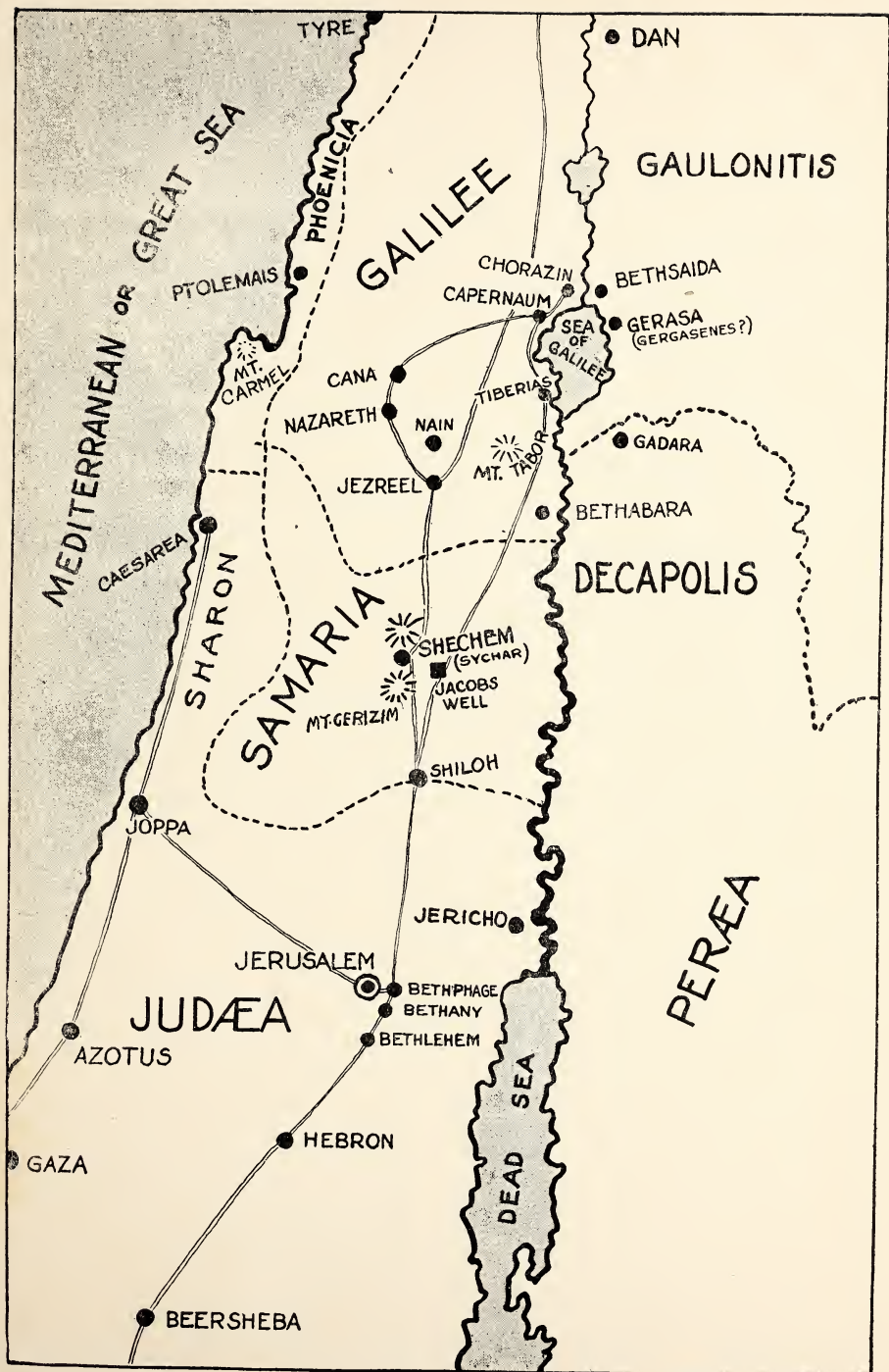
Note how Jesus represents by contrast the unfaithful servant. **If that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and be drunken**, the lord will come when he is not looking for him and will cut him off. He will cast him out and place him among the unbelievers. Note this: that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, shall be beaten with many stripes. This servant's evil nature is condemnable before his lord, as it asserts itself in taking advantage of his lord's absence. This type of servant thinks that he can do these evil things and not be called to account. Many people are that way today. They do things under the cover, thinking they will not be brought to account, but God will reward them according to their deeds. "By this parable our Lord is describing those who abuse their trust in the church. They act as they prefer and not as Christ requires."—Dr. James R. Kaye. When

people are in the midst of their evil doings, God sees their wicked deeds. As in the case of this evil servant, they will receive just treatment at the hands of the Lord in the Great Judgment. They will not be able to escape his just reckoning with them.

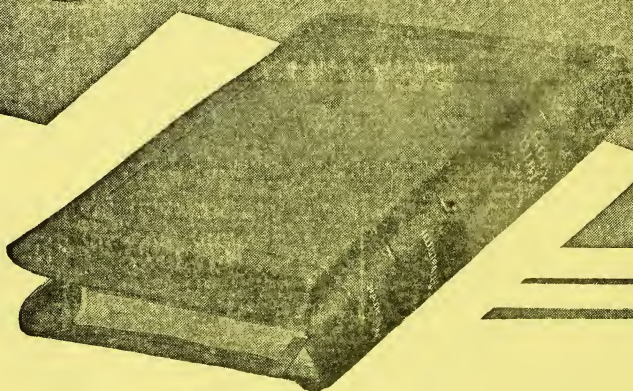
Then again, the man who knew and ignored; that is, knew his lord's will and deliberately disregarded it, shall have no excuse for the neglect of his duty, (verse 47). There is no excuse for him. He shall be beaten with many stripes. He deserves just punishment for his wilful neglect. "He can plead neither ignorance nor the lack of opportunity," for he knew his duty but failed to perform it. But the other man, on the contrary, who knew not, **and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes**, verse 48. This man, on the account of committing things ignorantly, received punishment in a lesser degree. "He that knew not his lord's will, through carelessness and neglect, and his not having such opportunities as some others had of coming to the knowledge of it, and did things worthy of stripes, he shall be beaten, because he might have known his duty better, but with few stripes; his ignorance excuses in part, but not wholly."—Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. V.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Have some member of the class to discuss the qualities of the good servant. What was wrong with the second servant? Describe how the "knowing servant" and the "ignorant servant" shall be punished.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Faithful Servants.—Matt. 24: 36-51; 25: 14-30; Jno. 9: 41; Ac. 17: 30; I Tit. 1: 13-16.



Bibles for Young People



King James (Authorized) Version **The Best Selling Edition of the World's Greatest Book**

Convenient size to handle—type that is easy to read.

Containing

64 pages of Bible Study Aids specially prepared for the use of young students—
8 pages of maps in full color—presentation page.

New Bold Face Type **Self-Pronouncing**

Synopsis at head of every chapter

Page size, $4\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$ inches

INEXPENSIVE . . .

yet attractive, durable Bibles for Gift or Reward. Containing 16 pages of illustrations, 8 of which are in full color.

No. 119—Flexible, overlapping covers of artificial leather, red edges, headbands. **Price \$1.00**

No. 120—Flexible, overlapping covers of genuine Fabrikoid, round corners, red edges, headbands. **Price \$1.25**

No. 121—Flexible, overlapping covers of genuine Fabrikoid, round corners, red under gold edges, headbands. **Price \$1.50**

No. 123—Flexible, overlapping covers of genuine leather, red under gold edges, headbands. **Price \$2.25**

No. 121RL—Contents and binding same as No. 121 but WITH THE WORDS OF CHRIST PRINTED IN RED. **Price \$1.75**

No. 123RL—Contents and binding same as No. 123 but WITH THE WORDS OF CHRIST PRINTED IN RED. **Price \$2.50**

AND the LORD spake unto Mo-
ses in the wilderness of Si-
nai, in the tabernacle of the congre-

Specimen of Type

THE PERFECT GIFT BIBLE

De Luxe thin paper edition. Beautifully illustrated with 32 pages of the famous Hardy paintings reproduced in full color.

No. 111—Without helps. Bound in genuine Fabrikoid, limp, red edges, round corners, headbands. **Price \$1.50**

No. 112—Genuine brown Fabrikoid, padded cover design in gold and brown duotone, gold edges. **Price \$2.50**

No. 110—Flexible, overlapping covers of fine grade of Fabrikoid, embossed titles. Supplied in black, blue and maroon. Edges stained to harmonize with binding, headbands, bookmark **Price \$2.00**

No. 108—Flexible, overlapping covers of genuine leather, red under gold edges, headbands, bookmark. **Price \$3.00**

No. 110RL—Contents and binding same as No. 110 but WITH THE WORDS OF CHRIST PRINTED IN RED. **Price \$2.25**

No. 108RL—Contents and binding same as No. 108 but WITH THE WORDS OF CHRIST PRINTED IN RED. **Price \$3.25**

cp286.

The Advanced Quarterly

For Use By

ADULT

and

YOUNG

PEOPLE'S

Classes



PUBLISHED BY
Free Will Baptist Press
AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

THE ADVANCED QUARTERLY

for

Young People and Adults

REV. R. B. SPENCER ----- *Editor-Writer*

Volume II

First Quarter, 1941

Number 1

January-February-March

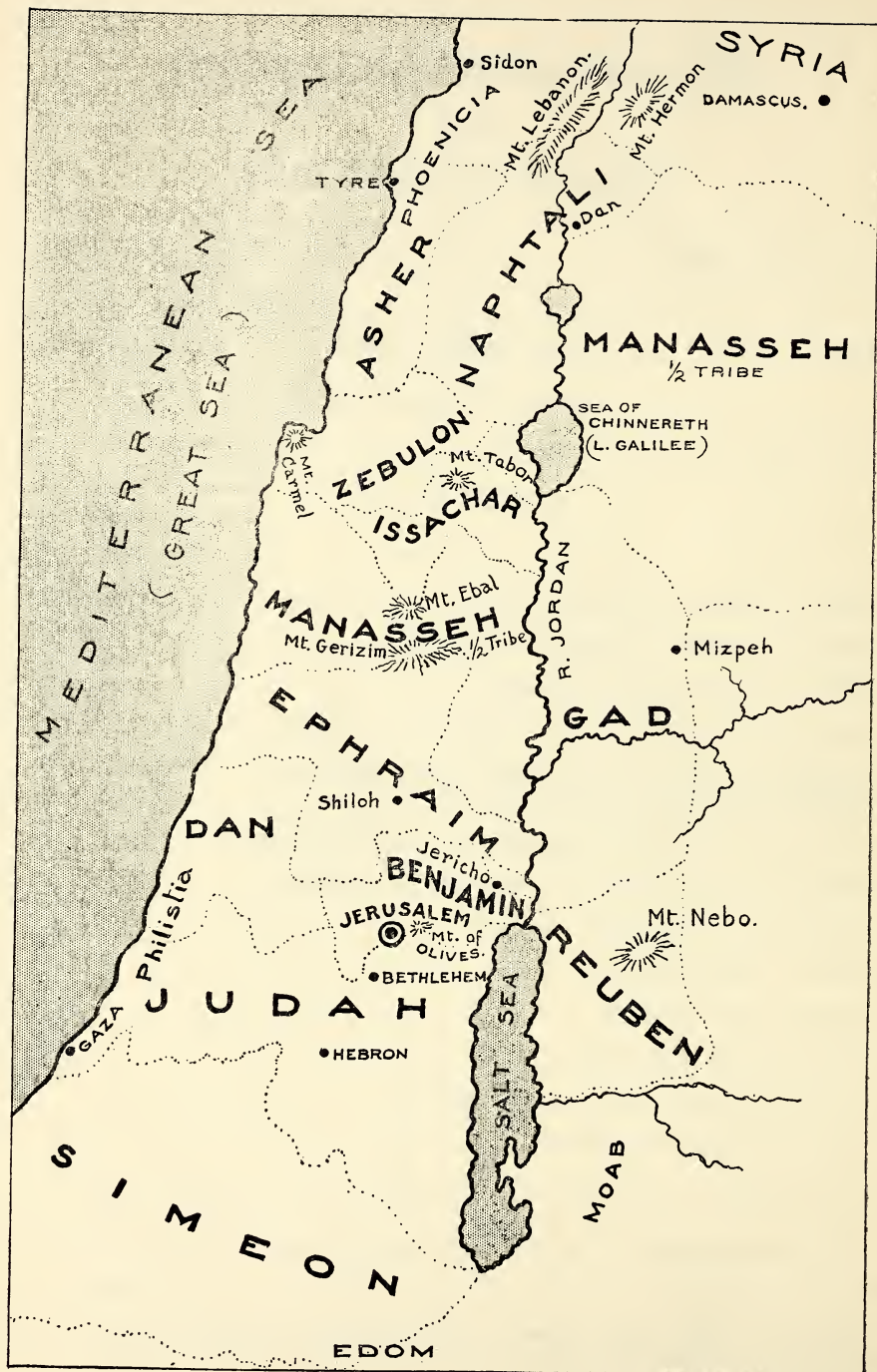
C O N T E N T S

	Page
1. January 5: Jesus and Human Affliction -----	3
2. January 12: Christ's Valuation of Personality -----	8
3. January 19: The Slighted Invitation -----	12
4. January 26: Christ's Concern for the Lost -----	17
5. February 2: The Individual's Responsibility Regarding Beverage Alcohol (Temperance Lesson) -----	22
6. February 9: The Christian Attitude towards Possessions -----	27
7. February 16: Jesus Teaches Forgiveness and Gratitude -----	32
8. February 23: Jesus Calls to Prayer -----	37
9. March 2: The Authority of Christ -----	41
10. March 9: Christ Rejected -----	47
11. March 16: The Lord's Supper -----	51
12. March 23: Jesus Condemned and Crucified -----	56
13. March 30: Christ's Commission -----	60

Published Quarterly by the Free Will Baptist Press, Ayden, North Carolina.

Price 8 cents per copy ----- 32 cents per year

Entered as second-class matter, at the Post Office at Ayden, North Carolina
under the Act of March 3, 1879.



Lesson One for Sunday, January 5, 1941

Jesus and Human Affliction

(Luke 13: 1-5, 10-17)

Golden Text: We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Heb. 15a.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(*Authorized Version*)

Luke 13:

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans, were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called

her to him and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite! doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: Sometime in November or December, A. D. 29.

Place: Perea, that part of Palestine which was east of the Jordan River, opposite Judah.

Persons: Jesus, the afflicted woman and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To set forth the need of personal salvation.
- (2) To show Jesus' love for the suffering.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mk. 16: 17, 18.

T.—Mk. 9: 17, 18.

W.—Ex. 20: 9, 10.

T.—Matt. 12: 10-14.

F.—Mk. 3: 1-5.

S.—Lu. 14: 5, 6.

S.—Lu. 19: 9, 10.

THE INTRODUCTION

The students of the Adult and the

Young People's classes will find in this lesson the emphasis which Christ placed upon the subject of individual salvation. Also he has made it plain that people are not to speculate about what will happen to others, and at the same time neglect their own souls.

In the scripture text for this lesson, Christ has stressed the thought of personal salvation by the use of striking illustrations. In the first two illustrations of those who had met sudden death, Christ pointed out to the Jews the need of their individual repentance. In the story of the bowed down woman, he taught the lesson of the need of immediate cure—being freed from physical and sinful bonds. Just as Jesus desired to save people from sin then, so he desires to save men in our day.

I. CHRIST TEACHING THE NEED OF REPENTANCE

(Lu. 13: 1-5)

1. Tragic Story Told Jesus:

Some Jews, for it is supposed they were Jews, told Jesus a tragic story. Observe first, in verse one, these Galilaeans—the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices—had gone sometime before up to Jerusalem to offer, at the Feasts, probably Feast of Tabernacles, on the altar their sacrifices. Note, at that time Pilate was governor of Judah, while Herod ruled Galilee. These Galilaeans, those whom Pilate “mingled their blood with their sacrifices,” were, according to Dr. Lightfoot, “themselves killing their sacrifices, and that Pilate's officers came upon them by surprise, and thus killed them, mingling the blood of these sacrificers with the blood of the sacrifices.” We do not know the number of these Galilaeans, but a few, it is supposed, whom Pilate had some bitter resentment against. Such an outrage as this on Galilaeans may have been one of the causes of the

enmity which arose between Herod and Pilate (Luke 23: 12).

Who were these Galilaeans who were thus cruelly treated by Pilate? Some commentators hold to this view: “Some think that these Galileans were of the faction of Judas Gaulonita, called also Judas of Galilee (Acts 5: 27), who disowned Caesar's authority and refused to pay tribute to him; or perhaps these, being Galileans, were only suspected by Pilate to be of that faction, and barbarously murdered, because those who were in league with that pretender were out of his reach.”—*Matthew Henry's Commentary Vol. V.* Whether these Galileans were guilty of rebelliousness against the Roman authorities or not, is not known, but the story related to Jesus is that Pilate mingled their blood with their sacrifices in the court of the Temple.

2. Christ's Reply to this Report:

Jesus related a story parallel to the one which the Jews had told him. He told how the tower of Siloam had fallen and had suddenly killed eighteen people. By use of comparison here, he said to these Jews, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? Jesus used this method to put these men to thinking, and to teach them a lesson in righteous living. The tower of Siloam had, a short while before, fallen, and had buried in its ruins the eighteen persons. (By the way of explanation here, Dr. Lightfoot has reasoned that this tower adjoined to the pool of Siloam, which was the same with the pool of Bethesda, and that it belonged to those porches which were by the pool, in which the impotent folks lay, that waited for the stirring of the water (John 5: 3), and that they who were killed were some of them,

or some of those who in this pool used to purify themselves for the temple-service, for it was near the temple.) Whoever they were, their end was tragic, as was the sudden death which Pilate visited upon these Galileans who were offering sacrifices unto the Lord.

After Jesus had related the tragic end of the eighteen persons in a parallel with the massacred Galileans, note his point of teaching. He brought up the question of personal sins, and not the extent or degree to which others had fallen into sin. Whether these murdered Galileans, who were killed unmercifully and without warning, were greater sinners than other Galileans, or the eighteen persons, who died suddenly in the fall of the tower of Siloam, were sinners above all men in Jerusalem, was not the question here with Christ. He said, **Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.** Jesus made the application of repentance a personal one—**except ye repent.** They were sinners, and it mattered not if some were greater transgressors than others, they needed to repent of their sins. Small sinners, as well as great sinners, need to repent of their transgressions against God.

Now, What does Jesus expect us to do? How do we stand before him? We are to make honest inquiry about our conduct. What about our own sins? It is certain that we have committed sins. Biblical statements, the testimony of those who know us best, and our own consciences—all affirm this to be true. But the question is: Have we repented? Have we sought forgiveness? Have we made our salvation a personal matter? Are we resting in the mercy of God which is in Jesus Christ our blessed Redeemer? If not, then we shall be lost, for impenitence means ultimate death and eternal punishment. There is no way of escape for those who know the will of God, but wilfully disobey his commandments. Remember, Christ impressed the duty of

repentance upon those Jews. "The same Jesus that calls us to repentance because the kingdom of heaven is at hand, bids us repent because we shall perish."—**Matthew Henry.**

CLASS DISCUSSION: In what ways were the two stories told in this study similar? Why did Jesus bring the matter of personal repentance to these Jews? If salvation is a personal matter, what is the responsibility of each person? Is it just as necessary for the small sinner to repent as it is for the great sinner to repent?

II. THE MIRACULOUS HEALING - OF A WOMAN

(Lu. 13: 10-13)

Jesus was accustomed to go to the synagogue on the sabbath day to teach. He taught the people the scriptures. It is good for everyone to go to church on the Lord's day to study his word, and to worship him in the beauty of holiness.

1. The Bowed Woman, an Object of Charity:

There was in the synagogue on that sabbath a woman who **had a spirit of infirmity** eighteen years, verse 11b. She was bowed together and could not lift up herself. She had been in this condition for eighteen long years. Her diseases were incurable. She could not stand erect. What a pitiful object was she as she, with great difficulty, entered into the synagogue! But note, she went to the synagogue on the sabbath day to worship God. Her diseased condition did not prevent her from going to God's house for worship. She did not use her infirmity as an excuse to stay at home when the time came for worship. But think how many people today stay away from church on Sunday because they do not feel well. The least provocation keeps them away from church. Some simple excuse, not a very good reason, causes

them to absent themselves from God's house for worship on the Lord's day. But this afflicted woman, though bowed down and could not sit up straight, went on the sabbath to hear God's Word proclaimed. Is it not true that bodily infirmities, unless they are very grievous indeed, should not keep people from attending public worship on the Lord's day. Remember, God can help us beyond all of our expectations. Many people have been made to feel better—ill feelings having passed away—after having attended religious services on Sunday and having entered into the spirit of true worship.

2. Jesus' Offer of Help:

Note, Jesus saw this bowed down woman in the synagogue that morning. Yes, his eyes fell upon her. He always sees the afflicted ones—the sincursed souls, and the broken and diseased bodies of humanity. So he looked upon this object of pity. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him. Think how the worshipers fixed their eyes upon Jesus and this woman! They waited to see what he would do. But let us observe that there is no record that this woman made any effort to call to Jesus first. She had come to the synagogue to be taught by him and to get good to her soul. But note, Jesus called to her. He saw her trouble. He knew her long years of suffering. He knew what joy would come to her heart when she was healed.

Now, note the miracle which Jesus performed in the presence of the Jewish worshipers that sabbath morning. He said to her, **Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.** He laid his hand on her. The supernatural power of healing instantly had its effect, and **immediately she was made straight.** Yes, eighteen years of bound infirmity was loosened instantaneously by the power of God. She was made whole. What a cure! What supernatural power manifested there in the presence of the people by

the Son of God! See how she straightened up! Hear her praise God! She praised God for the wonderful cure of a disease which had bound her for eighteen long years. She had been unable to life herself up, but Christ could straighten her in a moment's time. The flesh that had been bound for eighteen years by Satan was made clean and straight at the touch of the Master's hand. "When crooked souls are made straight, they will show it by their glorifying God."—Matthew Henry.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the cure which Jesus performed in the synagogue. How did the bound down woman express her joy? When souls bound in sin are healed by the blood of Christ, how should they act?

III. THE OFFENCE TAKEN BY THE RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE

(Lu. 13: 14)

Observe now how the ruler of the synagogue took an offence against Jesus for healing this woman on the sabbath day. He said to the people, **There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.** Hence, he considered that Jesus had committed an offence by using the sabbath day in which to heal this woman. He became indignant because it was done on the sabbath day, or so it was his opportunity to oppose Jesus. There are some people in our day who very readily take offence at the minister for something he said in his sermon. But, as long as Jesus taught in the synagogue the law and the commandments on the sabbath day, there was no objection raised, but for him to heal—perform miracles—on the sabbath was a thing out of place, so this ruler thought. Instead of receiving the act of Jesus with much joy, he resented it with bitter hatred. Never was such honor done to the synagogue of which

he was ruler as Christ had done that day, and yet this ruler became offended at the cure. Note again, he turned to the people, the worshipers in the synagogue, and expressed to them his indignation, thus seeking to stir up them against Christ. Said he to them (And we repeat for emphasis), **There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed.** To him it was all right for Jesus to teach the law and the prophets on the sabbath day, but to heal on that day it was wrong. He classed that as work, as though it were something of a temporal nature, and not divine healing. See here what light he made of this miracle: "You may come and be healed any other day of the week." It was a thrust of contempt against Christ's divine power. But there are some today who consider the Christian religion with the same contempt. As this ruler sought to carry his point by speaking to the congregation in this censorious way about Jesus, so some people today speak in critical terms of the religion of our blessed Savior. Note how this ruler of the synagogue stretched the law beyond its intention. He was making healing or being healed with the touch of the hand, or with words from the lips, to be that work which is forbidden to be done on the sabbath day. But according to the apostle Paul, works of mercy and charity are in a manner works of piety (1. Tim. 5: 4). Remember, such healing power was evidently the work of God; and if teaching the law and the prophets on the sabbath was right, then certainly divine healing was proper to be done on the sabbath day.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask a member of the class to describe the attitude of this ruler of the synagogue. Why did he turn and speak to the people concerning this act of Christ? Why was this criticism unjust?

IV. JESUS' JUSTIFICATION FOR HIS MIRACLE

(Lu. 13: 15, 16)

Christ readily defended his act. He said to this ruler, **Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?** Do you not administer to their physical necessities, give them necessary food and water on the sabbath day? Certainly you do. You see no wrong in doing that on the sabbath. But you consider the healing of this woman on the sabbath an offence. **Ought not this woman, being daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?** She is more than the beasts of burden; she is of Abraham's seed; and has been afflicted by Satan for eighteen years. Your people are never disallowed the watering of their cattle on the sabbath day. Was not the need of healing of this bowed down woman on the sabbath day of greater importance than watering the beasts of burden? Christ said, "Thou hypocrite," false pretender, you who are a leader of your people and who understand the law, stand up and deny the right of divine healing on the sabbath. You should first consider human suffering and accept God's will toward his people. Let humanity's needs be not deferred!

Let us note in this connection that it was considered by the Jews a barbarous thing not to water and feed their stock on the sabbath day, "for a merciful man regards the life of his beast." Shall not this woman, with the touch of the hand and a word spoken, be loosed from a much greater grievance than that which the stock undergo when they are kept in the stall for a day without water? Is she not to be considered on the sabbath of much more concern than the cattle? She is a daughter of Abraham. She is

a member of God's chosen children in whom you take much pride. In view of this fact, Should she be denied a divine favor on the sabbath when the ox and the ass are well cared for? As she is a daughter of Abraham, she is entitled to the Messiah's blessings on the sabbath day. Satan hath bound her; he has had a hand in her infirmity; but his power must not be deferred until tommorrow, it must be broken today. Thus, we see how Christ took a simple principle of teaching, as used in this account, to set

forth the right of divine healing on the sabbath day.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How did Christ meet the ruler's opposition? What lesson does it teach? How may we apply this teaching to our own lives?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Some Light on Who Shall Be Saved.— Luke 13: 22-30; Matt. 9: 35; Mk. 6: 6; Jno. 7: 34; Rom. 9: 31; Isa. 55: 6; Matt. 25: 10, 12; Matt. 8: 11, 12; 13: 42; 24: 51.

Lesson Two for Sunday, January 12, 1941

Christ's Valuation of Personality (Luke 14: 1-14)

Golden Text: Is not the life more than meat (food), and the body than raiment? Matt. 6: 25b.

THE PRINTED TEXT (*Authorized Version*)

Luke 14:

And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him.

2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3 And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?

4 And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go:

5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: January, A. D. 30.

Place: Perea, east of the Jordan River.

Persons: Christ, the sick man, the Pharisees and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To set forth the teaching of Jesus concerning healing on the sabbath.
- (2). To show the right attitude which the guests and the master of feasts should take toward others.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 12: 10; Lu. 13: 15.

T.—Ex. 23: 5; Deut. 22: 4.

W.—Pr. 25: 6, 7. Lu. 18: 14.

T.—Pr. 29: 23; Matt. 23: 12.

F.—Jam. 4: 6; 1 Pet. 5: 5.

S.—Neh. 8: 10, 12; Rev. 19: 9.

S.—Matt. 22: 2; Pr. 9: 2, 5.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson is a study of the true value of personality. Christ's teaching, as given in the scripture text of this lesson, can be most practically applied to people everywhere. The same principles, those which Christ set forth in speaking to the lawyers and the Pharisees, are applicable to us in our own ways of living. He emphasized the need of right relationships of man with man and group with group. He used concrete examples to set forth his teaching of the right way in which people should treat others.

I. THE MIRACLE PERFORMED
AT A FEAST

(Lu. 14: 1-6)

1. The Friendly Christ:

"Our Lord was often found in the homes of friends and of citizens of Palestine who could not exactly be called friends, breaking bread with them and enjoying their hospitality." *Peloubet's Select Notes*. It is striking to note that Jesus enjoyed fellowship with other

people. His whole mission on earth was to manifest love for depraved humanity. His masterful teachings, his wonderful miracles, and his tragic death on the cross—all were striking evidences of his compassion for mankind. The Gospels bear record of some of the most beautiful incidents which occurred while Christ visited the homes of those who invited him to their feasts.

In this study, note that Christ went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day. He went only to eat bread and to enjoy the hospitality, let us think, to take food as was necessary on the sabbath as on other days. Matthew Henry has said in his commentary, "The Son of man came eating and drinking, conversing familiarly with all sorts of people; not declining the society of publicans, though they were of ill fame, nor of the Pharisees, though they bore him ill, but accepting the friendly invitations both of the one and the other, that, if possible, he might do good to both." Jesus manifested his willingness to be the Friend and Savior of all men. May we take a lesson here of true friendship, and not hesitate to visit the meek and lowly, nor scorn them because of their low station in life. Christians will do well to visit such homes. Many could be won for Christ and lasting friendships could be built up for the good of society.

2. The Certain Man before Christ:

Now, note that **there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy**, verse 2. The word "dropsy" is **hudrox** in the Greek, meaning water. "The disease is characterized by an accretion or accumulation of water in the cellular tissue or serous cavities."—J. R. Willis. The record does not show whether this man was placed there as a trap, or was there by accident, or had come with the hope of being healed. The word "Behold" seems to imply that his presence was unexpected. He had learned, doubtless, that Jesus was dining at this home on the sabbath, and he went there to be healed.

He took him, and healed him, and let him go. It was to be remembered that Jesus went about doing good. In this case he used the opportunity of healing on the sabbath day this man with the dropsy. As in the previous lesson, Christ healed the bowed down woman in the synagogue on the sabbath, so here he healed this sick man in the home of the Pharisee on the sabbath day. Whether the company of Pharisees opposed Jesus or not, they **held their peace**. The miracle was performed perfectly, and the cured man greatly rejoiced, let us believe, as did the bowed down woman in last Sunday's lesson, when Christ healed her in a moment's time. When Christ had healed this man he let him go. Thus, the cure having been made, this man went on his way rejoicing.

3. They Held their Peace:

When Christ asked the lawyers and the Pharisees the question: **Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit (well), and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?** They held their peace. Is it not right for you to care for your domestic beasts on the sabbath day when they fall into the pit or cave? They are your property, and

are they not worth much to you? Certainly you do care for them, and since you do for your own interest, should you find fault with me for healing a man with the dropsy on the sabbath day? Is the domestic beast of more concern than a man sick with the dropsy? You care for your ox and your ass, not so much out of compassion to the poor creatures fallen in the pit, but you do it as a concern for your own material interest. Then, Why should I not heal the sick on the sabbath out of love and compassionate feeling which I have for troubled humanity? Since you are willing to show mercy to your domestic animals on the sabbath, why should I be censured by you for healing man of his diseases on the sabbath day? Note, **They could not answer him again to these things**, verse 6. They were not willing to admit that Christ was right in his argument. "If you would do this for one of your own, what is wrong in my doing it for this man who is standing here suffering in our midst?"—Peloubet's Select Notes.

Let us draw three lessons from this teaching; namely, (1) Jesus often used the occasions and circumstances, by which his opponents sought to entrap him, for doing good and to confound his enemies; (2) he did not let an opportunity pass without first healing the person who had come to him in faith and loving trust; and (3) he would not allow those who opposed him to divert his purposes in performing an act of immediate healing, or exercising a deed of friendship. The selfish and hypocritical Pharisees could not, by their shrewd trickery, turn him from his divine mission in the world. He is the perfect example of what all Christians should be; that is, unselfish, concerned about the welfare of the lost, and ever willing to be a blessing to humanity.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How did Jesus show his friendship? Describe what

Jesus did on the sabbath in the Pharisees' home. What happened to the sick man? Why did Jesus ask the Pharisees the question, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" What points of teaching do we get here from this study?

II. JESUS' REPROOF TO GUESTS STRIVING TO SIT UPPERMOST

(Lu. 14: 7-11)

1. How to Sit at Tables:

In verses seven through eleven, Jesus sets forth profitable discourse concerning the way guests should take their seats in the guest chamber. Christ's discourse with his disciples at his table was often good and to the use of edification. The observance of good etiquette is always right, whether the occasion be a sacred wedding feast, or some formal state celebration.

He marked how they chose out the chief rooms. Christ had observed at different times and on different occasions how the lawyers and the Pharisees sought the high places. Read Luke 11: 43. Such practice had become a general custom with many of them. He pointed out how they chose the chief rooms; that is, every man, when he came in, sat down in the best seat he could find. It expressed the fact that the Pharisees were selfish and seekers of the most prominent seats in public gatherings. Note, **Those that were bidden.** This makes us to believe that it was a formal occasion. As the guests came to the feast, they sought the best seats instead of pausing a moment for the host's servants to direct them to their proper places. It is well to note here that in the common activities of life Christ is ever watching us. He notes what we say and do, not only in our churches, but also at our tables and at our work. It is true today that some people seek the chief seats and the most prominent places. This is often seen in church work. Such seeking is expressive of self-

exaltation. "The vice of securing the prominent places at table, and elsewhere, was so often and general among the Pharisees that Jesus scored it more than once" (Luke 20: 46; Matthew 23: 6; Mark 12: 39).—Peloubet's Select Notes.

2. Those Having to Come Down to Lowest Seats:

Christ reminded them that, in their taking the highest seats, they might have to come down and give the high seats to others who were more noble than themselves. Thus, they would have to take with shame the lowest seats among the guests. Jesus said, **But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room,** verse 10. When you enter the guest chamber, take the simple seat along with other guests. Now, the master who bade you to come may call you, and say, **Friend, go up higher.** Then you will be honored by the man of the house. You will then **have worship in the presence of them that sat at meat with thee.** You will be in your right place with the other guests. But should the master of the feast say, **Give this man place,** it would be a disgrace before all the company to the person who thought himself more deserving than he really was. Selfishness and pride will sooner or later have its shame, and will finally reap its fall. But, the way for one to rise high is for him to begin low. Let us note at this point the advice of Solomon: "Stand not in the place of great men, for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up higher; than that thou shouldest be put lower" (Prov. 25: 6, 7). It is true, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Christ reprove the lawyers and the Pharisees for the way they acted at feasts? What was his teaching concerning those whom the master might call down to the lower seats? With respect to this teaching, How should church members conduct

themselves in matters pertaining to church work?

III. THE MASTER OF THE FEAST REPROVED

(Lu. 14: 12-14)

After having reprov'd the guests for seeking the higher seats at the feast, Christ turned to the master to reprove him. He said, **When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors: but, call the poor, the maimed, the lame.** What Christ meant to teach here is the master should give preference to inviting the poor and needy to his feasts rather than feasting his special friends. The rich did not need his generosity, but the poor did need his kindness. Moreover a great act of helpfulness would be shown by his inviting the poor people to a great dinner, as well as great joy would come to his heart for the kind act. "Our Savior here teaches us that the using of what we have in works of charity is better, and will turn to better account, than using it in works of generosity and in magnificent house-keeping." —Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. V. The well-to-do people today often invite as their guests those friends who are of high rank and noble standing, and spread tables before them, while their poor neighbors go hungry for the

want of sufficient food to nourish their weakened bodies. In the sight of God, What honor is it for the rich to give to the rich, when the poor and needy all around are living in want and misery?

Christ is showing this master that the rich do not need the great suppers, but the poor, on the other hand, are always in need of the sympathy and help of the wealthy. Solomon said, "He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want" (Prov. 22: 16). Pliny once wrote, "Give to thy friends, but let it be to thy poor friends, not to those that need thee not." Look to the objects of charity, and help them, and you will be rendering a real service to humanity. Then "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Christian people today should take this teaching of Jesus to heart, and seek to render a true service to the poor and needy.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Jesus reprove the master for inviting the rich and not the poor to his feast? Will this teaching apply today to many of the rich people in this country? What should be the attitude of Christians concerning the poor and needy?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Proper Use of Wealth. Ac. 4: 31-35; Lu. 12: 15-21; Matt. 19: 16-22; Mala. 3: 7-15.

Lesson Three for Sunday, January 19, 1941

The Slighted Invitation

(Luke 14: 15-35)

Golden Text: Come: for all things are now ready. Lu. 14: 17b.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 14:

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he

said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 Then said he unto him, A certain

man made a great supper, and bade many:

17 And sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came, and showed

his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: January, A. D. 30.

Place: Somewhere in Perea, on the east side of the Jordan River.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To teach the need of sinners accepting the gospel invitation.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Rev. 12: 9;

T.—Matt. 22: 2.

W.—Matt. 22: 11-15.

T.—Pr. 9: 2, 5.

F.—Matt. 21: 43.

S.—Matt. 22: 8.

S.—Ac. 13: 46.

THE INTRODUCTION

In the scripture text which we have here for study, Christ used the parable of the Great Supper, the parable of the tower, the parable of the king going to war, and the parable of the savorless salt. From these simple illustrations, or pictures of life, Jesus drew splendid spiritual truths concerning the kingdom of God.

It is well to note that the circumstances of this lesson are similar to those of our last Sunday's lesson. Here we find Christ dinning in the home of a Pharisee in Perea. The student will recall that he had just finished his remarkable dis-

course on the importance of one taking a humble place when invited as guest to dinner. Thus, in this discussion we have the parable of the Great Supper, which has often been compared to the parable of the wedding garment (Matt. 22: 14).

I. THE EXCLAMATION OF ONE OF THE GUESTS

(Lu. 14: 15)

The occasion of Christ's discourse on the parable of the Great Supper, which follows, was given by one of the guests who exclaimed, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Remember, Christ had given a discourse on "rules of feasting" in verses seven to fourteen which were studied in last Sunday's lesson. In concluding his discourse to the guests and the master on rules of feasting, Jesus said, **Thou shalt be blessed.** Thereupon, one of the men was moved, under one impulse or another, to utter the exclamation given in verse fifteen.

Now, what was this man's design for speaking to Jesus in this manner? Looking on the spiritual side, let us reason it out thus: (1) Admiring Christ for the good rules which he had just given to the guests and to the master of the feast, this man was longing for the coming of the kingdom of God; or (2) since Christ had mentioned the resurrection of the just, as a recompence for acts of charity to the poor, he desired to confirm what Jesus had said; or (3) inasmuch as Jesus had made reference to the heavenly reward being greater than earthly joys, he wished him to speak on concerning heavenly things. Although the company was sitting at meat, enjoying temporal blessings, Jesus meant to teach in his discourse the spiritual blessings which the just would enjoy in heaven, feasting at the Lord's table.

But let us note there are those who see a different attitude manifested on the part of this guest-member concerning the matter. "It would seem that the words of this unnamed fellow-guest were really uttered to turn the discourse of our Lord from the very personal, intimate matters he was speaking about, which were indeed a real rebuke to those who were gathered there, to what this man would call more "spiritual" themes, and certainly to a general subject which would not involve so much personal embarrassment and chagrin as many of the sentences did involve which had just fallen from our Lord's lips."—*Peloubet's Select Notes*. "You can see the sanctimonious old hypocrite solemnly shaking his head, and letting the words fall unctuously from his tongue. But, with all our Lord's benignity and forbearance, there was one thing He could not stand, and that was cant. He therefore does not answer the man as if he had been a simple soul longing for communion with God, but utters a parable to remind him and the rest that verbal appreciation of the blessedness of the kingdom was often

joined with an entire refusal to enter it."—*Marcus Dods*. John Kelman has had this to say about the design of this guest-member, "This religious little creature comes to the assistance of his host and tries to save the situation. But Jesus is come not to save situations, but to save souls. He has no use for edifying remarks which turn aside his direct thrust at the conscience of men." Whatever turn the man meant to give this situation, for or against the position which Jesus took, it is certain that Jesus meant to teach the company at the feast a great spiritual lesson. His words were too precious for any religious cant or jesting.

CLASS DISCUSSION: May the teacher, or a leading member of the class discuss what seems to be the most plausible reason for the guest-member making the statement to Jesus.

II. THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER

(Lu. 14: 15-23)

1. The First Invitation:

In reply to the guest mentioned in the foregoing discussion, Christ said, **A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.** Note in the first place, the invitation embraced many, not a select few, but many people. This certain man sent his servant to welcome **them that were bidden to come.** The master of the feast had made ready the great supper. All things were ready for the guests to come and sit down to the great feast.

Here in this parable is given a general invitation. Let us observe that Christ invited, during his ministry, the whole nation and the people of the Jews to partake of the benefits of his gospel. The free grace and mercy of God is found in the rich provision which he has provided for poor lost souls. "Now all things are ready, the full discovery of the gos-

pel mystery is now made, and all the ordinances of the gospel are now instituted, the society of Christians is now incorporated, and, which crowns all, the Holy Spirit is now given."—**Matthew Henry**. The gospel invitation has been extended to one and all, and we are to accept it now. His great banquet is ready for everyone to feast upon his grace and mercy, and rejoice in partaking of his heavenly feast.

"The kingdom of heaven, under the imagery of a great banquet, was a picture well known to the Jews of that age. The guests in the Pharisee's house for the great part were probably highly cultured men. Or once they would grasp the meaning of the parable. They know that the supper was heaven, and the Giver of the feast was God."—**The Pulpit Commentary**.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. Not one of them was a valid reason for non-attendance at the feast. One said, I have bought a piece of ground; another, I have bought five yoke of oxen; and the third said, I have married a wife. These excuses represent nothing more than usual everyday causes of the indifference which people show concerning the kingdom of God. Remember, there is one common to all of these excuses; namely, the present temporal good is valued higher than the spiritual. To them the desires and satisfactions of this life are to come first. Let us class the three excuses under three heads: (1) human delight of possessing earthly goods; (2) personal pleasure for increasing the store, or adding coin to coin, field to field; and (3) the hunger to satisfy the social ties, whether at home or abroad. The direct application of this teaching was to the Jews of the Lord's own time.

2. The Second Invitation:

When the servant, upon returning

from giving the first invitation, told his lord that those bidden had rejected the invitation to the supper, the master was greatly displeased, and immediately sent out the second invitation. Said he to this servant, **Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind, verse 21b.** Go now through broad streets and narrow lanes, and bring in the poor artisans, the afflicted persons to my supper. Let them know that I desire their presence at my feast. "Pick up the common beggars, pick up the vagrants, or those that are returning in the evening from their work." We have reasons to believe that the invitation to this class of less cultured people was generally accepted.

The servant replied, **Lord it is done, . . . yet there is room.** They have come, but all the seats are not filled. There is room for still others. Note, we have here a hint of the vast size of the kingdom of God. "All this in the first instance referred to the Galilaean peasants, to the Jewish publicans, to the mass of the people, who heard him, on the whole, gladly."—**The Pulpit Commentary**. **Matthew Henry** says in his commentary, "Many of the Jews are brought in, not of the scribes and Pharisees, such as Christ was now at dinner, who thought themselves most likely to be guests at the Messiah's table, but publicans and sinners; these are the poor and the maimed." Remember, this second call was to those in the city, for we find no mention here of going without the walls. Thus, this second invitation was extended to the poor, the halt, the lame, the blind, and so on in the confines of the city. Many came to the supper, but the tables were not filled, and a third call went out.

3. The Third Invitation:

This time the invitation was extended to those in the highway and hedges.

In the first invitation the word was "come," representing a cordial welcome; in the second the word was "bring," encouraging, begging them to come to the supper; and in the third it was "compel," constrain them, be earnest with them, convince them that the lord is sincere and he greatly desires their presence at his feast. By force of argument, not by force of arms, plead with them to accept the royal invitation of the master. This invitation included all out of the city. Accordingly, the third call was not made to inhabitants of a city, but to those living abroad. "No walls hem in these far-scattered dwellers among the highways and hedges of the world. This time the master of the house asks to his great banquet those who live in the isles of the Gentiles. And compel them to come in."—The Pulpit Commentary. A greater insistence is made on this class of outsiders to come to the feast than was used upon the favored class who was first invited. Yes, these Gentiles must be brought, by religious arguments and sincere persuasions linked with gentle force, as the angels used when they led hesitating Lot out of the city of doom to a place of safety. Those in the wide world, who have never tasted of the master's supper, are urged to come to the feast. The words of Dr. Trench in the following paragraph are helpful here:

"The giver of the feast does not anticipate on their part any reluctance to accept his invitation, nor any indifference toward it, which should need to be violently overcome. What rather he expects is that these houseless dwellers in the highways and by the hedges will hold themselves so unworthy of the invitation as hardly to be persuaded that it was intended for them; will not be induced without a certain constraint to enter the rich man's dwelling, and share in his magnificent entertainment. And when we pass on to the spiritual thing

signified, since faith cannot be forced, what can this compelling mean, save that strong earnest exhortation, which the ambassadors of Christ will address to their fellows, when themselves deeply convinced of the tremendous issues which are for every man linked with the acceptance or rejection of the message which they bear?"

CLASS DISCUSSION: Have a member of the class to discuss the First Invitation. Why were the three excuses, which the invited gave, counted not valid? Who were the people referred to in the Second Invitation? How did they respond? To what class of people did the master extend the Third Invitation?

III. THE DOOM OF THOSE WHO REFUSE THE INVITATION

(Lu. 14: 24)

For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper. We have here Christ's concluding sentence relative to this great teaching which must not be wrested from its context, but stressed with much importance. The acceptance of this gospel invitation is the essential thing if men are to be privileged to feast at the Great Supper in that great day. Think how Christ used love and the powers of persuasion to lead people to accept the invitation offered in the Gospel! The gospel invitation is extended to the most vile sinner as well as it is to those who are morally upright. It is free for all. As the servant was sent to "call," to "bring," and to "compel," the three different classes to come in to the supper, so Christ's followers today are to be used of the Lord to win souls for God. We must be willing to sacrifice and serve for the salvation of souls. Dr. Wm. M. Taylor said, "Until one is willing to be himself crucified for the salvation of those who reject Christ, he has no right

to find fault with this declaration made by Christ."

People have heard the gospel since the coming of Christ, and they are still hearing it. But many will not believe. This same gospel invitation is extended today to everyone who will hear it. Let us beware, therefore, of its importance and not neglect the great salvation which Jesus brought to the world. Remember, it is a terrible thing for people to hear this blessed gospel invitation, and then wilfully reject it, for the time will come when the door to the Great Supper will

be shut, and then the Master will say, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Who is responsible when God's invitation to the Great Supper has been rejected? Who are privileged to accept this gospel invitation? What is the doom pronounced upon those who do not accept the invitation?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Some Truths as Taught by Other Parables.—Lu. 14: 28-35; Matt. 5: 13; Mk. 9: 50; Rom. 12: 18; Heb. 12: 14.

Lesson Four for Sunday, January 26, 1941

Christ's Concern for the Lost

(Luke 15)

Golden Text: For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Lu. 19: 10.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

Luke 15:

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying.

4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours,

saying unto them, Rejoice with me: for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me: for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: January, A. D. 30.

Place: Some place in Perea east of the Jordan River.

Persons: Jesus, the Pharisees, publicans, sinners, and his disciples.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To set forth the truth that Christ, by the use of parable, taught the true love of the heavenly Father for the lost.
- (2). To teach that God desires everyone to have eternal life.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 9: 10; Ac. 11: 3.

T.—Gal. 2: 12.

W.—Matt. 18: 12.

T.—1 Pe. 2: 10, 25.

F.—Lu. 5: 32-35.

S.—Lu. 15: 11-32.

S.—Ac. 2: 39; Eph. 2: 13, 17.

THE INTRODUCTION

Although the scripture reference in this lesson covers the entire fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel, the printed text embraces only the first ten verses of the chapter. These first ten verses, therefore, have been used as the basis for the exposition of this lesson, while the last twenty-two, embracing the story of the Prodigal Son, have been given to the "Additional Home Study" section, listed at the end of the lesson discussion.

The parable of the lost sheep and also the one of the lost coin contain points of difference and similarity, and at the same time are meant to teach the lesson of seeking lost souls for the glory of God.

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED JESUS TO UTTER THESE THREE PARABLES

(Lu. 15: 1, 2)

A publican in Palestine in Christ's day was a Jew in the employ of the Roman Government, collecting taxes. Since these publicans were tax-collectors, generally from their fellow Jews, for the much hated Roman officers, they were utterly despised by other Israelites. This was especially true since their profession was characterized generally by corruption and graft. With reference to sinners, those referred to here, they were those who were living scandalous lives; that

is to say, those who were not living in conformity with the Levitical Law. "These people here referred to were simply outcasts, shunned by true Jews and despised by Jewish religious leaders."—Peloubet's *Select Notes*. Thus, we have here these people, though considered outcasts, drawing themselves to Jesus to hear him.

Why did they draw near to hear Jesus? They wanted, we believe, to hear his message of hope. They desired to learn something of his excellent doctrine of salvation. They were desirous to know that God really loved them, and that he would redeem them from their shackles of sin and hopelessness. No man had ever spoken to the multitude like Jesus had spoken to them. Although his words were of stern rebuke, yet they were of hope even for the hopeless and the most vile sinners. Hence, the publicans and sinners in great numbers crowded around the Master to hear his message of love. Remember, we must have the sincere desire to hear Christ in all of our approaches to him. We are to hear with an attentive ear the divine instructions which he gives us, and to seek his answers to our prayers.

Note in verse two the murmuring of the Pharisees and the scribes: **This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.** He is taking up time with them, eating with them, and showing his concern about them. Such is a reproach against him. That is the way they looked upon him. Thus they took an offence against Jesus for his taking up any time with this despised class of people. Let us observe, this very act on the part of the Pharisees showed that they became angry with him because he was extend-

ing the means of grace and salvation to these lowly people. In their opinion such vile creatures were below real repentance and divine pardon. Accordingly, these strict religious Pharisees looked upon these publicans and sinners as vile outcasts from God's mercy and love. "They thought it a disparagement to Christ, and inconsistent with the dignity of his character, to make himself familiar with such sort of people, to admit them into his company and to eat with them."—*Matthew Henry's Commentary*.

There are some so-called high toned religionists today who, like these hypocritical Pharisees, look down with ill favor upon many of the poor souls when they are constrained to seek God's loving kindness and tender mercies. To them such lowly people are beyond redemption. But not so with Christ. "This man does not patronize sinners. He takes them into his comradeship, makes friends of them, takes them to his heart. That is the Gospel."—*Peloubet's Select Notes*. The weak and the strong, the high and the low, the despised multitude and the favored few—all are precious in the sight of Jesus. It is not God's will that any should be lost, but that all might be saved.

This man receiveth sinners. That was his purpose in coming upon the earth. He came to seek lost souls. He received them, drew them to his heart, and communicated to them his own love and purity that they might take him as their personal Savior. Thus he was willing to show these publicans and sinners his love and sympathy, and to teach them the way of eternal life. There was no better way to do this than by giving them a parable in which the sinful might readily see their lost condition and then seek pardon and eternal salvation.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the standing of the publicans and sinners in

Palestine during the days of Christ? Why did they come to Jesus to hear him? What attitude did the Pharisees and the scribes take toward Jesus for associating and dining with these sinners? What was Jesus' purpose on earth?

II. THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

(Lu. 15: 3-7)

1. Lost from the Fold:

It was not only fitting that Christ should justify himself before these critical Pharisees and scribes for his position which he took in paying attention to the publicans and sinners, but also it was an opportune time to teach these hypocritical religionists a lesson in real religious services. In view of this fact, he made it plain to these incensed, religious bigots that the worse these people were in the depths of sin the more glory would redound to God in their being saved. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety and nine just persons who do not need repentance. Accordingly, Christ related the Parable of the Lost Sheep to them, illustrating the need of the lost being saved. The lost, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, need to come to repentance, and to be pardoned of their sins.

Said Jesus, by parable, the sinner is lost to God like a lost sheep from his shepherd. Note here how Christ used a simple illustration from pastoral life in Palestine to teach a spiritual truth which was needed both by publican and Pharisee. He often used some human experiences of every-day life to bring to the minds of his hearers truths applicable to spiritual living. Now, relative to the shepherd leaving his flock and going to find his lost sheep, Dr. W. M. Taylor has had this to say:

"Picture his look of concern as he is about to lead his flock homeward to the fold, to escape, it may be, the gather-

ing storm, and finds, on taking tally, that one of the number has strayed. He swiftly scans their faces that he may know the missing one by name. Then, leaving the ninety and nine in the care of his hireling, he turns his back on home and warmth and food to face the threatening night, for this is work that he will entrust to no eye or ear, to no hand or foot, save his own. . . .

"So the Great Shepherd of your souls and mine turned his back on home and comfort, and sought the wilderness land, that, through pain and tears and blood, he might find the track of our wandering feet—And bring us home upon his shoulders laid."

2. God's Care:

Note God's care for poor wandering sinners. Not willing that any should be lost, Jesus seeks the vilest sinner, as well as the least, that none may be lost. Christ is not satisfied with the ninety and nine safe within the fold, but he seeks the straying ones. The church should not be satisfied with the faithful few souls who are always present for Sunday worship, but should go out and seek the return of the indifferent members and find the lost ones, and entreat them to come to the fold of God in true penitence. "God follows the backsliding sinners with the calls of his word, and the striving of his Spirit, until at length they are wrought upon to think of returning."—Matthew Henry. As the shepherd, upon finding the tired and straying sheep, lays it on his shoulders, just so Christ is seeking lost souls, and when he finds them, he draws them to his bosom, and blesses them with the cleansing power of his blood. How wonderful it is! What consoling thought! It matters not how low a person has gone into sin, Jesus is seeking, calling for him to come unto him for pardon and redemption.

He layeth it on his shoulder, rejoic-

ing. Note the word, "rejoicing." The shepherd is glad when he has found his lost sheep, for he does not want a single one of them to be lost from his flock. Nor does God want a single soul to go down into utter despair and eternal condemnation. This joy he makes known to his fellow-shepherds who keep their flocks about him. Yes, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying, . . . Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I went out into the wilderness, down by the waterfalls, through the narrow passes, and searched until I found it. Then, I laid it upon my shoulder and brought it safely to my sheep-fold. Now I can rejoice. Note the beautiful phrase of the apostle Peter which is fitting here, "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (I. Pet. 2: 24a).

So, Christ rejoices together with the angels in heaven when his undershepherds go out and find the lost, and bring them to his fold. Such faithful service is expressive of one's true love to God and the cause of righteousness. How fitting are these words which Christ spoke to his disciples, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15: 13). Christ the great and good Shepherd is ever ready and willing to receive the lost, as members of his heavenly fold, whenever they have been redeemed, brought back from the wilderness of sin and the allurements of this world.

3. Fishers of Men:

Christ told his disciples that they were to be fishers of men. They were to go out with the Gospel and win souls to his fold. They were given instructions for this express purpose. We Christians are today to do the same thing. We are to take God's holy message of love and mercy to the lost. Christian people should do more of this kind of work than is being done today.

There are many people in our own country who need the proper spiritual light given to them concerning God's Word and the plan of salvation.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How did Jesus justify himself before the Pharisees? How does the parable of the lost sheep illustrate the condition of lost souls? To what extent does God care for the lost? What about the rejoicing in heaven over those who are saved? Who are to be the fishers of men for God's heavenly fold?

III. THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

(Lu. 15: 8-10)

Finishing the lesson as taught by the Parable of the Lost Sheep, Jesus related the story of the woman who had lost a coin. Professor Plummer has said, "The main points of difference between this and the preceding parable are the changes from a man to a woman, and from a sheep which could stray of its own accord, and felt the evil consequences, to a coin which should do neither." From this thought it follows that, while the man might have been moved to act by pity rather than by self-interest to bring back the straying sheep, the woman must have been moved by a sense of self-interest only to recover the coin. Note, the lost sheep represented one hundredth of the shepherd's flock, while the lost coin was one tenth of the woman's possessions. The coin here referred to was a **dracham**, which corresponded to the Roman **denarius**, and was worth about twenty-five cents in our money. Though of less value than the price of one sheep, the lost coin was a tenth of the woman's possessions, whereas the lost sheep was one hundredth of the man's possessions. As the lost coin was out of the right relationship to life; that is, of no use or value while lost, just so, the lost sheep was out of relationship with the flock, and was of no value to the shepherd

until it should be restored to the fold. Likewise, people lost in sin are out of harmony with God, and are of no value personally to the cause of righteousness until they become saved from their lost condition. Lost souls are by far of more value than lost sheep or coins, and should be more greatly sought.

"In the story of the lost sheep the point of the parable turns upon the suffering and the sin of man, under the image of a lost sheep searched for and restored by the Divine pity. Here, in the second parable-story the ruined soul is represented as a lost coin, and we learn from it that God positively misses each lost soul, and longs for its restoration to its true sphere and place in the heaven life and work for which it was created."—**The Pulpit Commentary.**

Are there not many people today who, living apart from God's holy will and failing to render worthwhile service for the cause of Christianity, are lost coins? Are they not lost to God's great cause? Could they not shine for the Master if they would come out from the wilderness of sin and quit their hiding from God, and enter upon the right relationships with God and their fellow-men? They have God-given talents, but fail to use them for his glory; they have fine capacities for true Christian service and righteous living, but they wilfully neglect to use them. As the restored sheep and the found coin brought joy to their owners, so men and women—backslidden church members—bring happiness to the pastor and the "faithful few" when they are earnestly entreated to come back to the right relationships with God and the church.

Remember, the woman called her friends and her neighbors when she had found the coin. As in the case of the shepherd, so here, the joy must be shared with others. It represents a longing for sympathy. We are told to rejoice with

those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep. Christ said, **There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth**, verse 10. Angels rejoice when one sinner has been brought to salvation. Why should we not rejoice when a lost soul turns from sin to a life of righteousness and holy living? All sinners are lost to God, and it is the duty of Christian workers to seek the lost, and to persuade them to come to Jesus for redemption.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What are the points of similarity between this and the preceding parable? What are the differences? How does the lost coin represent a person living in sin? Does God miss each lost soul? What lesson do we get from the "seeking" in each parable? How may this teaching be applied to us today?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
The Lost Son. Lu. 15: 11-32; Ac. 2: 39; Eph. 2: 13, 17; 5: 14; Rev. 3: 1.

Lesson Five for Sunday, February 2, 1941

The Individual's Responsibility Regarding Beverage Alcohol

(Habakkuk 2: 15; Genesis 4: 9-12; Mark 9: 42-48; I Thess. 5: 22)

Golden Text: Abstain from all appearance of evil. I Thess. 5: 22.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Habakkuk 2:

15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

Genesis 4:

9 And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength: a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

Mark 9:

42 And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is

better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire;

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

I Thessalonians 5:

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: It is not exactly known when the quarrel between Cain and Abel arose. The book of Habakkuk was written about 625 B. C. The words of our Lord, quoted

here, were uttered in the autumn of A. D. 29. The first Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians was written about A. D. 54.

Place: It is not definitely known where Cain and Abel lived at the time this tragedy took place. Habakkuk prophesied for Israel. The words given in this lesson from Christ's discourses were uttered in Capernaum. Thessalonica was a great city in Asia Minor.

Persons: Cain and Abel, Habakkuk, the apostle Paul, Christ and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To teach individual responsibility concerning intoxicating liquors.
- (2). To show that God holds the individual responsible for the way he treats his fellow-man.
- (3). To teach the proper use of one's mental and physical faculties.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Gen. 9: 22; Hos. 7: 5.

T.—Ps. 9: 12; Jo. 8: 44.

W.—Heb. 12: 24.

T.—Rev. 6: 10; Ju. 5: 23.

F.—Matt. 18: 6.

S.—Lu. 17: 1; De. 13: 6.

S.—Matt. 5: 29; 18: 8.

THE INTRODUCTION

The student will find it profitable to make a careful study of the three aims of this lesson. The story of Cain's murder and its application to human life constitute thought worthy of deep consideration. The teaching of Jesus concerning the way we should treat our fellow-men is to be applied to each individual. His discourse on the proper use of one's physical and mental powers and activities, as given in this lesson, is worthy of everyone's careful consideration.

I. THE SIN OF THE USE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS

(Hab. 2: 15)

The scriptures emphatically speak against any and all forms of drunkenness. It is a known fact that all promoters, those who use intoxicating beverages to the damnation of their own souls, and those who insist upon giving

alcoholic liquors to others, stand condemned before God. Daniel tells us in chapter 5 that Belshazzar was one who stood condemned before the Lord when he drank wine before a thousand of his lords.

This woe, which Habakkuk declared God would send upon the people of Israel, still stands against any and all who are guilty of giving his neighbor strong drink to ruin his life. The Holy Word distinctly avows that God will condemn that individual who leads his brother—his fellow-man—into drunkenness. "Such men," says one Bible commentator, "are rebels against God." When a brother does this, he is putting the cup of fury, the cup of debauchery, and the cup of destruction to his neighbor's lips. Hence, the result shall be, as expressed in verse 16, "the cup of the Lord's hand shall be turned unto thee." God will smite with his destroying woe, with his heavy affliction, those who are held guilty before him for putting the cup of strong drink to his brother's lips.

What does it mean to others when a man encourages his neighbor to partake of alcoholic liquors, and by his repeated acts cause him to become an habitual drinker? According to many authentic records, it simply means this: (1) the ruining of character and the lowering

of the drinker's earning power; (2) the wrecking of home-life, and the bringing of shame upon relatives and loved ones; (3) the increase of crime and the corruption of society. It means, moreover, untold suffering, hours of sorrowing, and the loss of love and respect which once was shared by the closest friends and the dearest loved ones.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Have a member of the class to relate some incident of the influence of strong drink which had great effect upon others. Have a member of the class to report on the fifth chapter of Daniel, discussion the ill effects of wine.

II. MAN HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS BROTHER'S WELFARE

(Gen. 4: 9-12)

We have here a study of the first murder. When parents disobey God, and sin enters the family life as a result of disobedience to God's commands, it is to be expected that the children will partake of the parents' weaknesses. That is exactly what happened in the case of Adam and Eve. They had deliberately disobeyed God and transgressed his command. Thus we have here in Cain's crime an evidence of family weakness.

1. Cain Brought to Trial:

God said, **Where is Abel thy brother?** He is not present with the others. As he is your brother, will you tell me where he is? Some Bible commentators think that God thus questioned Cain on the next sabbath after the murder, when the sons of God came, as usual, to present themselves before the Lord in a religious assembly. May we reason here that God asked Cain this question to draw from him a confession of his crime. It is to be granted that God knew Cain had committed the murder but he sought to bring the heinous deed before Cain's mind. Let him confess his

atrocious crime which he had perpetrated through his jealousy and hatred for his brother Abel. Let him confess before his God the taking of his brother's blood. Let him accuse himself of his tragic deed! Note, those who would be justified before the Lord for their transgressions must first accuse themselves for their evil deeds. And the truly penitent souls will gladly do this.

2. Cain's Plea:

Note Cain's plea. He pleads not guilty of his brother's blood. He tried to hide a deliberate murder with a deliberate lie to God. He knew that he had killed Abel, and then had the impudence to deny his crime before the Lord. He said, **I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?** Why should you ask me the question? See here how he tried to evade God—how he questioned God's right to quiz him concerning his own brother! It was his cunning attempt to divert God's purpose of drawing from him the truth of his crime. Matthew Henry says, "He flies in the face of God himself, as if he had asked him an impertinent question, the which he was now obliged to give an answer." Furthermore, it appears that he impudently charged his great Judge with folly and injustice in putting this question to him. Thus, in Cain's double sin, it appears that Satan was both a murderer and a liar.

Is not this the way sinners try to show deceitfulness to cover their vile deeds? Is it not characteristic of sinful men today to do the same when they are questioned before the courts? Do they not try to hide their atrocious crimes? They certainly do. Moreover, they secure all the means possible to evade the penalty of the law. But God cannot be deceived, and he will bring all transgressors before his great tribunal for just recompence of all deeds committed by all men. It is true, criminals often

go unpunished for breaking the civil and the criminal laws of the land, but transgressors of God's laws shall be brought to the final reckoning before the great Judge. All shall be judged according to the deeds done in this life, whether good or bad, great or small. It behooves, therefore, everyone to be just and honest with all people, and true to God.

3. Cain's Conviction:

God held Cain direct to the issue in question. There was no thwarting or diverting God from his purpose. The trial must go on, and God purposed to bring Cain to account. He said, What have you done? Now, what are you trying to do regarding the matter. You have tried to make light matter of my questioning you. You have tried to conceal your crime, but to no purpose. The evidence is against you. The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. Your brother's blood is a testimony against you. Your crime cannot be covered with your crafty maneuvering. You are guilty of taking your brother's life, and you did it through jealousy and hatred.

May we note that murder is a crying sin. There is none more so. Think how it haunts the souls of many murderers years after the crimes were committed! Note also, according to authentic records, how confessions have been made years later by some vile criminals. Yes, murder is a crying sin, and the awful deed haunts the slayer to his dying day. There is an old expression; namely, "murder will out." If not revealed through the courts of the land, it will, through the stinging conscience and the burning confessions of most criminals, finally find its way to the eyes of the world.

Note now the sentence which God placed upon Cain for his atrocious crime. And now art thou cursed from the earth,

verse 11a. God's judgment was upon him. But who is able to tell the extent and weight of a divine curse? Who knows how far it reaches or how deep it pierces the human heart? Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden of Eden; Nebuchadnezzar was driven from his throne to eat grass with the beasts of the fields; Lot's wife disobeyed God and was turned into a pillar of salt; and the plagues of Egypt brought untold sorrowing and suffering because of the transgressions of the people against God's commandments. And God said to Cain, Cursed is the ground for thy sake. You shall be a fugitive and a vagabond. The earth shall not yield to you her strength. Note here that God made the earth the avenger of blood; that is, he permitted Cain to continue upon the earth. He did not immediately cut him off, but permitted him to be punished with his fruitless toil on the earth. Thus, Cain found his punishment where he was to labor. Note, (1) natural blessings out of the earth were withheld from him; (2) settlement, a definite dwelling place, on earth was also denied him. A fugitive and a vagabond shall thou be in the earth. You will be in perpetual disgrace, and reproach among all men. You will be an outcast, a wanderer from place to place. People will shun you and look upon you with scorn. You will be in disquietude and in dishonor. Indeed, your brother's blood will still cry unto you from the ground.

Think how many murderers, like Cain, have wandered from place to place over the earth, with their sins crying against them! Think how some have disguised themselves, have hidden themselves in caves and remote places to flee justice! Like Cain, they became fugitives and vagabonds on the earth with men fearing them, searching for them, and standing outright against them. How applicable is Cain's story here to the escaped murderers of this age! But, like Cain

again, they cannot escape God's all-seeing eye, nor will they ultimately evade his just judgment in that great day.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the cause of Cain's crime? What was Cain's plea before the Lord? What was God's judgment, or punishment which he put upon Cain? How may some murderers of today be compared with the story of Cain?

III. THE SIN OF CAUSING OTHERS TO STUMBLE

(Mark 9: 42)

In this verse Jesus was bringing to his disciples the lesson, or the penalty for causing others to stumble. He took a little child and set it before them, and warned them concerning the offense against little ones—those easy to be led into the sinful things of this life. "The sense is: whoever destroys a child or a childlike believer spiritually incurs the great wrath of Jesus."—*Peloubet's Select Notes*. "Who so ever shall grieve any true Christian, though they be of the weakest, shall oppose their entrance in to the ways of God, or discourage and obstruct their progress in those ways, shall either restrain them from doing good, or draw them in to commit sin, it were better for them that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."—*Matthew Henry*.

The word here translated "to stumble" really means "to entrap." It always denotes spiritual destruction. Indeed, this thought as expressed by Jesus should awaken us all—parents and pastors, teachers and Sunday School superintendents especially—and all others who hold positions of influence, and those whose speech and conduct might tend to shape the attitude of others in the wrong way. What Jesus meant to convey was the enormity of the crime of ruining one of these little ones. Paul said, "If meat

make my brother to offend (stumble), I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend (stumble)." Christians should not do any act which would tend to cause others to lose their faith in God.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How may Christians cause others to doubt God's saving grace? What warning does God give concerning those who stand in the way of his little ones?

IV. CHRIST'S WARNING CONCERNING HELL

(Mark 9: 43-48)

Let us note here that Jesus passed, by a natural transition, from the harm which one might do to others, as was shown in the foregoing topic, to the danger one might be to himself, as he has shown in verses 43 to 48. In verse forty-two, which was discussed in the previous topic, Jesus warned his disciples concerning the harm that Christians might do by offending the little ones—the babes in Christ Jesus. But in these verses he directed his discourse to the individual himself. Here he makes a personal application of the teaching.

The proper use of a person's physical powers is here taught by the Master. The hand is man's instrument of work, his means of earning a living and acquiring wealth. In the course of life, a person might do a number of things in the wrong way. The foot is man's means of motion, and, like the hand, it serves as one agent for work in the support of life. It, too, may be used in a bad way at times for the building up of life's work. The eye is likewise a vital part of the body, and it serves as a means to aid an individual in working out his material support in this life. It might be used in a wrong way, together with the hand and the foot, to gain desired ends for one in an illegal manner. Note, these organs of the body, or agents of

service in life's endeavors, are servants of a higher power in man.

Since these instruments of the body are not responsible solely for their acts, they are innocent of what they do. What they do, whether good or bad, is determined by means of volition of the mind. It is true, they have the sense of feeling, but their activities, the things that they do, are controlled by the will power of the mind. They do the work; that is to say, the things that they do, under the power of the will. Hence, the mind first wills, then these agents respond to the desire of the will. Therefore, by the hand we accomplish things; by the foot we advance toward material achievements; and with the eye we seek the desires of our hearts, whether they be good or bad.

Examples: the hand that took the life of President McKinley was directed by the mind of Leon Czolgosz. The foot that suddenly slipped the gangboard, reaching from ship to pier, and sent a certain passenger to his sudden death against the broken piles below, was guided by the mind of the man who by pretense of accident sought to take the life of his fellow-man. The eye of covetousness in King Ahab for Naboth's vineyard was prompted by the wicked mind of the king himself.

The teaching which Christ here meant for everyone to understand is: (1) occasions for stumblings must be removed; (2) the human will must not direct the other organs of the body, as the hand, the foot, and the eye, to the commitment of acts purely unholy and sinful. The mind, then, the human will as a free agent, or the directing power over the body, is responsible for human choices and voluntary actions. Therefore, it is definitely urged that everyone should exercise strict self-discipline over his body. The spiritual life is what matters most, and the members of the body should not be directed to commit acts of violence. It would be better to suffer the loss of the hand, the foot, or the eye, than to go through life using them for evil purposes.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What are some of God's warning concerning the uses of the members of the body? Why are not the hand, the foot and the eye responsible for the evil acts that they do? Why should people be very careful in the exercise of self-discipline?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Victory over Sin. 1 Thes. 5: 22; Rom. 12: 21; 16: 19; I Cor. 13: 5; I Tim. 6: 10; II Tim. 4: 18; Act. 15: 20; Ps. 36: 9; 119: 130; 34: 14; 37: 27; 119: 101.

Lesson Six for Sunday, February 9, 1941

The Christian Attitude Towards Possessions

(Luke 16)

Golden Text: Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Lu. 16: 13.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 16:

10 He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall

give you that which is your own?

13 No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.

19 There was a certain rich man,

which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried:

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: January, A. D. 30.

Place: Perca.

Persons: Jesus, the unjust steward, the rich man and Lazarus.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To teach the need of true stewardship of possessions.
- (2). To show the certainty of reward after death.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Lu. 19: 17; Matt. 25: 21.

T.—Matt. 6: 24; 23: 14.

W.—Lu. 10: 29; I Sam. 16: 7; Ps. 7: 9.

T.—Lu. 7: 29; Matt. 4: 17; 11: 12, 13.

F.—Isa. 66: 24; Mk. 9: 44.

S.—Lu. 6: 24; Job 21: 13.

S.—Isa. 8: 20; Jo. 5: 39, 45; Ac. 15: 21.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with the parable of the unjust steward of a great estate, and also with the story of a very rich man and Lazarus. The majority of the students of the Young People's class and also those of the Adult class are quite familiar, we are certain, with both stories in this lesson. Since they have been preached about often by many ministers, and have been studied at different times by adults and young people, the average student will find this lesson very simple. Yet, there are many striking truths which the student should learn anew, and

apply them to his own life. There is a great responsibility which should concern everyone about the way material possessions are to be used.

I. TRUTHS DERIVED FROM THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

(Lu. 16: 10-15)

It is striking to note that many of Christ's parables were spoken concerning incidents connected with property and money. It denotes the importance which Christ attached to what men think of and do with their material possessions. He knew that property and money were essential things in human affairs, but, knowing the selfishness and greed in the hearts of sinful men, he aptly and frequently used parables of this kind to teach wonderful, spiritual truths.

Now, What teachings did Jesus give

to his disciples concerning this unjust steward? How may they apply to people today?

1. The Steward's Unfaithfulness:

We have set forth here the dishonesty of this steward. He had wasted his lord's goods—had embezzled them, or, through carelessness, he had lost them. He did not apply himself strictly to his duty. His lord had entrusted his great possessions into the care and keeping of this steward, expecting him to be honest and faithful with his goods until his return. But he proved to be untrue to the sacred trust which his lord had placed in him. Is it not true, he that is not faithful in that which is great, will be also faithless in that which is least? On the other hand, he that is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in that which is great. Note, this unfaithful steward was brought to account. His lord began to reckon with him. That is what God will do to everyone. He will call us into judgment. Then we will be required to give an account of our stewardship of life. If we have failed to give Christ our hearts, and have robbed God of what justly belongs to him in the way of Christian service, we will be condemned and cast out. Hence it is true: (1) we must, everyone of us, be discharged shortly from our stewardship in this world, for death soon comes to take us away; (2) that when our stewardship has been taken from us by death, we shall have to give an account in that great day to God; and (3) at the judgment we cannot then make amends to the holy Judge for our faithless stewardship while we were on earth.

2. The Steward's Embarrassing Situation:

But note now how this unjust steward sought a way to save himself from this embarrassment. He said, **What shall I**

do? When my lord takes away my good place, then what shall I do for a living? **I cannot dig.** I do not want to become a laborer to earn my bread. That is too lowly for me and beyond my rank. Neither can I go out and beg bread for my living, for I am ashamed to do that after having been the superintendent of a rich man's goods. Thus, the unjust steward found himself in a dilemma. Something had to be done. He had had a good position as superintendent over his lord's goods; he had been placed on a fine salary, but that was not enough, he had deliberately misused, squandered the lord's money; and now he must consider quickly what to do to save himself from future embarrassments.

Is this not just the way some fraudulent and faithless people do today in many channels of business? Do they not, in many instances, rob their employers of goods and money which belong to them? Then when they are about to be caught in their unjust dealings, they seek to commit additional sins to hide their shame and guilt. How characteristic this is of sinful men! Men in prominent government positions have embezzled money that was not their own. Tellers in banks have stolen money which belonged to the depositors. Managers of businesses have swindled their firms out of thousands of dollars. Not infrequently have men and women, employed as clerks, salesmen, and checking agents, robbed the business houses of goods and money. Like this unjust steward, they were placed upon their sense of honor and faithfulness, but, because of greed and selfishness in their hearts, they, too, deliberately stole some of their employers' goods behind his back, and pocketed some of his money. But, whether they were ever found out or not by their employers, it is a certain fact that God sees their every evil deed, and will render unto them in his own good time just punishment.

3. What the Unjust Steward Did:

He set about immediately to make close friendship with his lord's tenants. He said, I am resolved what to do, verse 4. I have thought out a way of escape. "I am acquainted with my lord's tenants, have done them many a good turn, and now I will do them one more, which will so oblige them that they will bid me welcome to their houses, and the best entertainment they afford; and so long as I live, at least till I can better dispose of myself, I will quarter upon them, and go from one good house to another."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol. V.** Note the crooked way in which he planned to make them his friends. It was by striking off a considerable part of their debts which they owed their lord, and then giving it in his accounts, as the superintendent of the estate, so much less than it actually was in reality. To him this was a clever scheme. So, he called in the tenants, and placed his plan before them. He then instructed the first to reduce his debt fifty percent. The second one he had to reduce his twenty percent. Remember, the difference was thirty percent which he made between the two tenants in reducing their debts. This was unjust. According to the figures as given in Peloubet's Select Notes on this point, the first tenant's debt amounted to about \$50 dollars in our money, whereas the second one's indebtedness was from \$500 to \$600 dollars. Thus, this unjust steward was showing discrimination between the two tenants in reducing their debts. He that was unjust with his lord in the first place was also unjust with his lord's tenants in the second place. Possibly he saw that it took more to gain the friendship of one tenant than that of the other. The purpose of it all was to seek admittance into their houses if his lord should put him out of his position. At the expense of his lord he was readily willing to make friendship afore-

time with his lord's debtors in order that he might, upon being cast out of his position, be received into their homes. From one wicked and faithless act he turns to another to save himself. A man deep in sin will seek to go deeper to hide his iniquities.

4. Application of this Parable:

If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? verse 11. Whatever we have are our Lord's goods, and we are held responsible for the way we use them. Note, the things of this world are the mammon of unrighteousness. They are, in other words, the false mammon, for they are often secured by fraud and deceit. Moreover, earthly riches are perishing things, and will bring disappointment to those who put their only trust in them. He who puts his trust in the uncertain riches of earth will surely fail in the end. The person who will not play fair with his fellow-men, will not be accounted just toward God. He who does not exercise his stewardship in a righteous manner over the material blessings which God gives him, cannot be accounted just and fair toward the heavenly Father. If he is serving the Devil by acquiring material possessions in a selfish and illegal way, he cannot then be of service to God in a righteous manner. **Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.** But he who serves God, who is holy and righteous, cannot serve the Devil, who is vile and wicked; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How was this steward untrue to his master? How did he try to get out of his embarrassing situation? What wrong did he commit against the lord's debtors? What is the application of this parable to unjust stewards today?

II. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

(Lu. 16: 19-31)

The story of this certain rich man and Lazarus is generally regarded as a parable, though not exclusively so by all Bible scholars. Some have taught, however, that it is the narrative of an actual, historical event. We are told that Luther and Calvin held to this latter view. In no other parable which Jesus ever taught is any person given a definite name. Whether it be history or parable, the truth as taught by it remains the same. May we note here that there is a connection with the preceding teaching of Christ concerning riches and the unrighteousness of wealth. Note that the rich man is not named. "He is often spoken of as 'Dives,' which is simply the Latin adjective for the word 'rich,' the word itself as an adjective occurring in the Latin Vulgate and as a proper noun as early as Chaucer."—*Peloubet's Select Notes.*

1. The Contrasted Conditions of the Two Men in this World:

This certain man was rich, clothed in expensive garments, and fared sumptuously every day. His wealth enabled him to have fine suits of clothing to wear, and enabled him to enjoy all the good things of this life. As far as money and riches were concerned, he could enjoy the material blessings of life. He could "enjoy a splendid banquet every day."

Lazarus, the certain beggar, was poor, wretched, and full of sores. He was hungry, and desired the left-overs from the rich man's table. He was in daily want and pain. Note the contrast! One rich in this world's goods, the other poor and diseased. The one nicely dressed every day, while the other was clothed in rags. The one was enjoying his many friends as they partook of his great feasts, while the other was living

in loneliness with the dogs only seeming to care for him.

2. The Contrasted Conditions of these Men after Death:

These men died as all men have to die. The rich man's wealth could not save him from death. He lifted up his eyes in hell. He was in torment. Lazarus, on the other hand, was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. "The phrase 'Abraham's bosom' is not a synonym for Paradise; but to repose on Abraham's bosom is to be in Paradise, for Abraham is there."—*Alfred Plummer.* (Read John 8: 56.)

It is well to note here that Lazarus does not speak a word during all the conversation between the rich man and Abraham. The rich man and Abraham are fully conscious in their respective places. Note how the rich man in torment remembers clearly the condition of his five brethren on the earth, and how he does not want them to suffer torment after death like he is suffering. Remember, he cannot communicate to them, but he asks Abraham to send Lazarus to speak to them. Relative to Hades, it "is the place where the wicked dead now are, and I am rather forced to believe that the flame is not a literal one, but that the suffering of the rich man is exactly identical with the suffering physically endured in such a condition as is described by the word 'flame.'"—*Peloubet's Select Notes.*

Why was the rich man suffering? It was not merely because he was rich, but because he, like many others both rich and poor, had lived for himself, had failed to love his fellowmen, and he had neglected accepting Christ as his personal Savior. He had lived without taking God into his life. No man can be assured of eternal life unless he becomes a saved person. This rich man had failed to live in accordance with Christ's command-

ments. He was rich in this world's goods, but was poor toward God. He had served mammon, the god of the flesh, but not the eternal God. On the other hand, Lazarus was in peace. He was happy, resting in Abraham's bosom. Note the contrast! He was resting because he had humbly served God while he lived. He had walked with the Lord in paths of righteousness, and had followed Jesus in the straight and narrow way. He had kept the faith. Thus, he was changed from a poor, troubled creature on earth to a happy, peaceful soul in Abraham's bosom in Paradise. Earthly sorrows need not debar a single soul from the eternal bliss of Paradise. The life lived for God is the one that counts most.

The great gulf separated the rich man and all his torments from Abraham and Lazarus in all their joy. It could not be

crossed over by either Abraham or the rich man. May we gather from this thought that "The saints now with the Lord are not able to minister, to comfort, to help, and to lead to repentance, those who have departed from this life without salvation. The eternal state of men is determined by their acts, their faith, or unbelief, their life, their conduct, in this world."—Peloubet's Select Notes.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the conditions of the rich man and of Lazarus in this world. Describe their conditions after death. Discuss the reasons for the difference of their conditions after they had died. What lessons may we draw from the teaching of this parable?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Difference between Serving God and Mammon.—Matt. 6: 19-23; 12: 35; 19: 16-21; Lu. 12: 13-21; Jas. 5: 1-6.

Lesson Seven for Sunday, February 16, 1941

Jesus Teaches Forgiveness and Gratitude

(Luke 17)

Golden Text: Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Eph. 4: 32.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 17:

Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come!

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a

day turn again to thee, saying, I repent: thou shalt forgive him.

11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that

he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering, said, Were

there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The events spoken of in this chapter occurred between January and March, A. D. 30.

Place: Christ's teaching in this chapter was given in Perea. The miracle of the healing of the ten lepers occurred near the border of Samaria.

Persons: Christ, his disciples and the ten lepers.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To show that it is a sin to give offence, but that it is required to forgive repentant offenders.

(2) To teach the need of strengthening one's faith.

(3). To show Christ's power to heal, and to set forth the need of more gratitude for the divine blessings given to men.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 18: 6, 7; Mk. 9: 42; 1 Cor. 11: 19.

T.—Lev. 19: 17; Pr. 17: 10.

W.—Jas. 5: 19; Matt. 17: 20.

T.—Mk. 9: 23; 11: 23.

F.—Lev. 13: 46; 13: 2.

S.—Lev. 14: 2; Matt. 8: 4.

S.—Lu. 7: 50; Matt. 9: 22; Mk. 5: 34.

THE INTRODUCTION

Christ set forth in his teaching in the verses covering the printed text the sin of giving offences. He has shown that repentant offenders should be forgiven of their trespasses against others. It is shown in the teaching here that one's faith should be strengthened. This lesson sets forth Jesus' power to heal and it reveals the need of more gratitude on the part of most people for God's great blessings bestowed upon them.

I. CHRIST'S TEACHING CONCERNING GIVING OFFENCES

(Lu. 17: 1-10)

In his teaching concerning offences,

Christ said to his disciples, Woe unto him, through whom they come! Heavy afflictions are the lot of those who willfully give offence, and cause others to stumble, or to err from the right way.

1. A Serious Sin to Give Offence:

While we may expect that offences will come, yet we should avoid offending anyone. It is impossible for us to prevent others from giving offences, but we are to guard our conduct lest we offend in word and deed. How may a person offend or cause one to stumble? First, by influencing others to disbelieve the truth of the Gospel; second, by raising unjustified criticisms of the Word of God; and third, by scoffing at the Virgin Birth of Christ Jesus, and by denying his deity and resurrection. Some have given offence by maliciously spreading hurtful gossip in the church and community about some member of the church or individual. Others have committed violent acts with the purpose of damaging or offending certain persons. Remember, Christ gave warning con-

cerning giving offences to his little ones—babes in Christ Jesus. It is true that some have given offence to young people who have expressed a personal belief in Christ as their personal Savior. Such offences have often been made to belittle or make light of the new converts, discrediting their sincerity in religion. Christ said that we are to take heed unless we offend one of his little ones. Some offences are purposely given to injure one's standing in society, or to hurt one's reputation, or to cause one to lose his position in life. For anyone to stoop to do such a thing against his fellow-man is a heinous sin. He should first take heed unto himself, for Christ has said, "Woe unto him, through whom offences come."

Note his words in verse two in this connection. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than he should offend one of these little ones. This means that speedy death to the offender is better than for him to live on in the flesh, and continue offending Christ's little ones. It would be better for him to be out of the way than for him to cause others to disbelieve the Gospel and miss eternal life. Moreover, it is better for the children of God, and especially for those who have just begun their Christian life, or those who are beginning and are still weak in the faith, that person who would give offence and cause such believers in Christ Jesus to stumble and fall away from God, to be cast into the sea. His death and abstinence from them is far better than his presence with them, and his continued offences to lead them from the saving grace of the heavenly Father. One vile offender may be the means of leading many down to eternal doom.

2. The Duty of Forgiving Offences:

On the other hand, there is the plain teaching that it is the duty of those who

have been offended to forgive their offenders. Forgiveness is one of the great teachings of Jesus. When the apostle Peter asked him how often should he forgive those who trespass against him, he said, "Until seventy times seven." If thy brother trespass (sin), rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him, verse 3. In this connection, the student is requested to read Matthew 18: 15-17, 21, for fine teaching on this point. Paul exhorted the Thessalonian brethren to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak, and to be patient toward all men (1 Thess. 5: 14). King Solomon said, "Reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool" (Prov. 17: 10). In the previous discussion, the point for study was **sinning against others**, whereas in this connection, the thought is **forgiving those who have sinned against us**. Note here, we are to rebuke, tell our offenders of their sin against us, and, if they repent and beg pardon, we are to hold the offence against them no more. We are to show to the offender how sinful his act was, and how we were hurt over his act against us.

All will admit it is a very delicate task indeed to go to an offender and rebuke him, but, if it is done in the true spirit of brotherly love, the offender will most likely be constrained to do the right thing. One should never go in the attitude of malice or hatred, but in the name of Christ and righteousness. Then, if he repent, forgive him. But he must be sorry for his offence. "We are not to forgive a man if there is no sign of repentance, if there is no sign of change of mind, if he persists in his sin, if he persists in doing the thing we have rebuked, we are not to forgive him."—*Peloubet's Select Notes*. But note, our Lord said that if he do this seven times, and say he repents, we are to forgive him. We are not to refuse forgiveness to a truly repentant soul. By withholding forgiveness, after the offender has peni-

tently begged forgiveness, we would then become a stumbling block in his pathway. A true child of God will gladly forgive any and all offenders when they sincerely repent and beg pardon for their offences committed.

3. The Need of Strengthening our Faith:

Following Christ's teaching concerning forgiveness, we have the teaching on faith. His disciples said unto him, Lord, increase our faith. They felt the need of more faith, possibly, in others; the need of more faith in themselves to do their Master's will; and the need of more faith in God and in believing in the sincerity of people in general. By comparing Mark 9: 24, in which we find that a certain father, upon Christ having healed his son, cried, "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief." This man believed in Christ's healing power when he saw the miracle performed upon his son. Note again, Matthew 17: 20, 21, how Jesus rebuked his disciples for their little faith.

What was the faith which the disciples had in mind or desired to possess? Was it not simply a greater belief in God, and taking him more zealously at his Word? Was it not the felt need of a more sincere belief which they desired to have in others, and in themselves? Was it not a longing which they had to do greater things for Christ and his kingdom? We are taught that great faith was necessary for the performance of certain things.

Now, may we note our Lord's answer. It was remarkable, though seemingly difficult to understand. Matthew Henry gives this explanation, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you might do wonders, much beyond what you now do; nothing would be too hard for you, that was fit to be done for the glory of

God, and the confirmation of the doctrine you preach." In Peloubet's Select Notes this explanation is given: "Our Lord does not mean that, whenever a believer should so wish, he could stipulate that a tree nearby should be uprooted and planted in the sea, for I doubt if any Christian in the last nineteen hundred years has accomplished just this particular feat, no matter what his faith was. God does not give us the power to do everything that is needed at any specific time. If there was need for a sycamore tree being rooted up and planted again in the sea, to glorify God, and to advance his kingdom, and a man really had faith in God that man was supposed to be the agent for accomplishing this miracle, God would certainly see that his faith was thus rewarded and the tree thus removed." Jesus was teaching his disciples that for them to be able to do great things they must have greater faith. There is no task that must be done for the glory of God, however great, but that it will be achieved, for God will see that the task shall be accomplished. Note the great work which has been done for the glory of God by such men as George Mueller, Hudson Taylor, David Livingstone, William Carey. These men had faith in God, and they did great things for his glory. People today need to pray for more faith. They need to believe more zealously in Christ who died for them, and to put more faith in their power to do real Christian service for the glory of God. Some Christians have come to believe that their efforts in the church among their friends are of no value, and therefore they quit trying to do services for the Lord.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why is it a sin to give offence? When should an offended person forgive his offender? Why do most people today need their faith to be strengthened?

II. THE MIRACULOUS HEALING OF THE LEPERS

(Lu. 17: 11-19)

In the study of this miracle of healing, may we note that only Luke has recorded it in the Gospels. There is mentioned, however, in Luke 5: 12-16, another miracle of the cleansing of a leper similar to and yet quite different from this one in many points.

1. The Cry of the Ten Lepers:

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem, he entered into a certain village. Note, the ten lepers met Christ as he entered into this certain town. They stood afar off, and lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. They did not come close to Jesus, but stood afar off; that is, kept their distance, knowing that by the law their disease obliged them to keep from the presence of other persons. It was a very contagious disease and incurable by medical skill, thus they were required by law to keep their distance. Note that their request was unanimous—all cried for mercy. Let us assume, they, having heard before of Jesus' wonderful works, cried unto him for mercy. When people are in great distress, either through some loathsome disease, deep sorrow, or stricken in dreadful poverty, they are made to cry unto the Lord for mercy. They then seek relief at the hands of the merciful God. Thus these lepers, never having realized any cure from their loathsome disease, sought mercy from Jesus. Yes, mercy is what we most desire when distress befalls us in this life.

2. The Cleansing of these Lepers:

Note first, Christ sent them to the priest. Let him inspect their case and judge concerning their state of leprosy. But this was for a purpose. Go to the priest, show yourselves to him. Such

was a trial of their obedience. Show your faith by doing what I ask of you. Archbishop Trench has said in this connection: "In their prompt obedience, they declared plainly that some weak beginnings of faith were working in them. For they must have known very well that they were not sent to the priests for these to heal them, for that was no part of the priests office, who did not cure, but pronounced cured." Remember, Naaman, having a like case of leprosy, was commanded to go wash in the Jordan River for his cure.

Note, **As they went, they were cleansed**, but Christ had not promised to cleanse them. They had not reached the priest's office before they were healed. They went, obeying Christ, and thus were made whole. Is it not true that those who expect Christ's favors must receive them in Christ's own way and method? We are not to question the way nor the method, but we are to do what Christ asks of us if we are to receive his blessings. If we will have faith and obey Christ, he will cleanse us of all our sins.

3. The Gratitude of One:

Only one of them returned to thank Christ for his cure. He fell at Jesus' feet in humble gratitude and thanks for what he had done to him. Note, he did not go on his way to the priest and offer thanks, for he knew full well that Jesus, not the priest, had removed his leprosy. It was by far more joy to this man to return and show Jesus his gratitude than to have continued on his way, and to have the priest declare him clean. He knew that Jesus was the Author of his cure, and he wished for him to have the glory of it.

But Jesus asked this man the question: **Where are the nine? Were there not ten cleansed?** What became of the nine? There are none of them found to give glory to God except this one—this

stranger, this Samaritan. How unthankful they are! They have not the gratitude to return as you have to give glory to God. But I say to you, **Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.**

Are there not some people today who are ungrateful to the heavenly Father for their many blessings? Are there not thousands who neglect to worship him on the Lord's Day? And are there not many who never thank him for their material blessings and comforts of this life? Certainly there are not only in this country but also in other countries. Think how appalling this is! How forgetful and how irreligious people are today! But remember, Jesus told the returned man that **thy faith hath made thee whole.** Faith is the principle thing.

A person without faith in God can have no hope in sharing the blessings of eternal life. He is doomed to eternal condemnation.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did the ten lepers cry to Jesus for mercy? Why did Jesus send them to the priest? What is the teaching here on obedience? Why did only one of the cleansed men return to give thanks to Jesus? What about people's ingratitude today for their many blessings which God so graciously continues to shower upon them?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Christ's Teaching Concerning the Kingdom. Lu. 17: 20-37; Rom. 14: 17; Matt. 9: 15; Jno. 17: 12; Mk. 13: 21; Gen. 19: 16, 24, 26; Matt. 24: 17; Mk. 13: 15.

Lesson Eight for Sunday, February 23, 1941

Jesus Calls to Prayer

(Luke 18)

Golden Text: Lord, teach us to pray. Lu. 11: 1b.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 18:

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed this with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast,

saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other:

for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: March, A. D. 29.

Place: Perea.

Persons: Christ, his disciples and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To emphasize the need of persistency in prayer.
- (2). To teach the need of humility in prayer.
- (3). To show that it is wrong to hinder others from coming to Christ.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Rom. 12: 12; Eph. 6: 18; Col. 4: 2.

T.—I Tim. 5: 17; Rev. 6: 10.

W.—Heb. 10: 37; II Pet. 3: 8, 9.

T.—Lu. 10: 29; 16: 15.

F.—Ps. 135: 2; Isa. 1: 15.

S.—Rev. 3: 17; Job 22: 29.

S.—Matt. 23: 12; Jas. 4: 6; I Pet. 5: 5, 6.

THE INTRODUCTION

Prayer is the central theme of this lesson. There is nothing more needed today in Christian life than the return to sincere prayer to God. While the entire eighteenth chapter of Luke is given in this lesson for study, we have attempted to discuss only the first seventeen verses. Both teacher and student should make a special study of prayer not only from the material given in this lesson, but also from parallel scriptures bearing on the subject.

I THE WAY JESUS TAUGHT MEN TO PRAY

(Lu. 18: 1-14)

We have here the study of two parables; namely, Parable of the Unjust Judge, and the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Christ's purpose in giving these two parables was to teach the need of persistency in prayer, and humility in prayer.

1. The Need of Persistency in Prayer:

He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, verse 1. Prayer is one of the great subjects of the Bible. There are instances of prayer offered up to God all through the Scriptures. The word "faint," as translated here, means literally "To give in, to relax, to let go, or to give up," either through cowardice or by faint-heartedness of the individual. Note that Paul, when thinking of his moments of distress, said, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not" (II Cor. 4: 1). "Christ declares in effect that this is the alternative before every one of us to pray or to faint.... If men faint, it is because they have ceased to pray."—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan. To faint is to give way, to relax both in mind and body; but to pray is to fix the mind and the heart upon God, to pour out one's petitions to the heavenly Father. To pray is to entreat God earnestly at the throne of grace for one's heart's desire. To pray is not to give up, but to hold on to God: not to grow weary, but to maintain faith and hope in eternal salvation. Remember, Paul exhorted the Galatian brethren in these words, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if

we faint not" (Gal. 6: 9). "To pray is to have the vision clear, the virtue mighty, the victory assured."—**Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.** Yes, we are to pray in faith and fervency, believing, God will hear and answer our prayers. It is the duty of everyone to pray, to persist in prayer. God, through the prophets, taught the need of prayer. Christ also taught his disciples the need of prayer. It is not merely a form nor a privilege, but a Christian duty to pray to the Almighty God. In times of distress and deep sorrows, as well as in peaceful, one should pray and not faint. When one is in depths of despair and all seems helpless, he should pray, pray with all his soul, and not faint. However hard the task, or however fierce the battle of life is, men ought always to pray and not to faint.

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of."

—**Alfred Lord Tennyson**

Now, may we note the story of the unjust judge and the widow. Note the character of this judge: (1) he feared not God, had no dread of the wrath of God, nor paid any regard as to his duty to God; (2) he did not regard man, had no fear of nor feeling for man's rights and privileges; and (3) he was a stranger both to godliness and honor. It is no wonder that he refused to show human sympathy or to give legal advice to this poor widow. It is true, one does not often find ready assistance where no fear of God is found embedded in the heart of man. It is a hard situation whenever irreligion and inhumanity are found in the life of any person. Indeed, it is more noticeable when found in men and women of rank and culture. Religion and justice should be the guiding principles of human service, but it is shown here that the unjust judge regarded neither.

What was the distressed case of the

poor widow? She had an adversary. Someone had wronged her. She needed legal advice. Doubtless this adversary, this annoying enemy, had already or was about to rob her of her possessions, or of her personal rights and privileges. She had a grievance, a case for the judge to settle. But he would not. She kept insisting, however, from day to day. **Avenge me of mine adversary.** Do me justice against mine enemy, against mine antagonist. Many a poor widow has had her adversary, and has failed to get justice. But this poor widow pressed upon the judge her case. She would not give up. The prophet Jeremiah tells us that magistrates were charged, not only not to do violence to the widow (Jer. 22: 3), but to execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor.

After a while; that is, after this widow had come repeatedly to the judge, he decided to hear her cause. Said he, **I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me,** verse 5b. Note that she pressed him with her pleadings, not with bribes nor threats, neither had she anyone to intercede for her, but with her own words she plead for freedom from her adversary. Accordingly, to avoid being troubled further with her, this unjust judge decided to avenge her of the difficulty. "Thus she got justice done her by continual craving."—**Matthew Henry.**

The Lord said, **Hear what the unjust judge said.** The application is for the encouragement of praying people. People are to pray with faith and fervency. They are to persevere in prayer. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing. Satan, the great adversary, is ever tempting people to turn from the right way and to enter into the paths of sin. It behooves, therefore, everyone to be fervent in prayer, believing that God will answer his petitions. St. Paul prayed often and with great fervency. He

wrote the Corinthian brethren, concerning the thorn in the flesh, these words, "For this I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me" (II Cor. 12: 8). Note how Isaiah said that God's praying people are to not give up, that they are told "to give him no rest" (Isa. 42: 6, 7).

2. The Need of Humility in Prayer:

Having finished the study of the widow and the unjust judge, may we now turn to the parable of the Pharisee and the publican who went up to the Temple to pray. Note first the prayer of the Pharisee: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast thrice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. Surely there was nothing wrong in this Pharisee having done these good things, but note how he boasted of his self-righteousness. He praised himself for having rigidly kept the Law in all of its minute details. He wished to be esteemed as a person of great piety, one whose life was bound with the restrictions of the rabbinical traditions. Thus this self-righteous Pharisee thought himself more holy than were other people. He not only had a high opinion of his self-righteousness, but he also depended upon the merit of it; therefore, he trusted in himself as being a most righteous person. Moreover, as a class the self-righteous Pharisees, like this typical Pharisee, despised other people who appeared less religious and looked down upon them with contempt, because they esteemed themselves greater religionists.

Note the contrast between this self-righteous Pharisee and the humble publican. In his prayer he said, God, be merciful to me a sinner. This publican readily acknowledged his sinfulness, and begged for mercy. Remember, both the Pharisee and the publican prayed in the Temple; one in humility confessed his

sin and begged for mercy; the other exalted himself because of his self-righteous feeling, and had contempt for others who seemed less religious. This Pharisee confessed no sin, and made no intercession to God for anyone. His prayer was an utterance of self-congratulation. He simply told God what a wonderfully good man he was. But note, the publican was as conscious of his sinfulness as the Pharisee was possessed with his self-righteousness.

Here is the answer which Jesus gave concerning the two men: **This man (the publican) went down to his house justified rather than the other.** This publican was justified before the Lord because he admitted his sinfulness and begged for pardon. He humbled himself and expressed his unworthiness. On the other hand, the Pharisee boasted of his goodness and exalted himself for being better than other men. He was not justified, therefore, before God in his self-exalted position, for Jesus said, **everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased.** The application of this teaching is to be applied to those who seek to exalt themselves before God for their goodness that they may humble themselves before the Lord, and be forgiven of their sins.

CLASS DISCUSSION: As used in this study, what is meant by the expression "ought always to pray, and not to faint"? Ask some member of the class to discuss the story of the widow's plea before the unjust judge. Describe the attitude of the judge. Why did the judge finally hear the cause of the widow? What lesson do we get here from this parable? What teaching does the parable of the Pharisee and the publican hold for people today.

II. CHRIST'S BLESSINGS UPON LITTLE CHILDREN

(Lu. 18: 15-17)

Following the teaching of humility in

prayer, as given in the story of the publican's prayer, it is fitting to study now Jesus' concern about the little children. Note here that some were bringing little children to Jesus. It is probable that some mothers were carrying their babes in their arms, while others led theirs by the hand to him. The disciples, doubtless, felt that children were too insignificant to be allowed to interfere with Christ's work, or to require his attention. But note Christ's words to his disciples: **Suffer little children to come unto me.** Do not hinder those who desire my blessings upon their little ones. They are precious in my sight. They are innocent and sweet. Prevent not a single one from bringing the little children to me! Do you not know that those who are blessed of me should desire to have their children blessed by me? Is it not true that they should hereby testify the true honor which they have for me by showing their concern in my blessing their little children? Let them, therefore, bring their little ones to me in tokens of their appreciations of my love and tender mercies toward them. As I have blessed others, do not interfere with my blessing these little ones. Isaiah said, "I will first pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessings upon thine offspring" (Isa. 44: 3). May we observe that those who humble themselves shall be accepted

with God, and that Christ has blessings in store for those who will live humbly before him as little children. Many whom the Lord's followers rebuke, the loving Master invites to come unto him.

Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child; that is to say, those who are not humble and thankful of the benefits of God's kingdom, shall in no wise enter into the kingdom. It is a serious offence for one to hinder anyone from coming to Christ. "The Christian nurture of children is the supreme need of the times."—Peloubet's *Select Notes*. For further references concerning the teaching which Jesus gave to those who would hinder others from bringing little children to him, read St. Matthew 19: 13-15, and also St. Mark 10: 13-16.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why were the people bringing the little children to Jesus? Why did the disciples rebuke them? What did Jesus say to his disciples? What about people today who hinder others from coming to Christ?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Man Who Came to Jesus but Left without Salvation.—Lu. 18: 18-30; Matt. 19: 16; Mk. 10: 17; Ex. 20: 12, 16; De. 5: 16; Rom. 13: 9; Eph. 6: 2; Col. 3: 20; Matt. 6: 19, 20; I Tim. 6: 19; Prov. 11: 28; De. 33: 9.

Lesson Nine for Sunday, March 2, 1941

The Authority of Christ

(Luke 19: 1—20: 8)

Golden Text: Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Lu. 6: 46.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 19:

41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even

thou, at least in this day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee,

that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

Luke 20:

And came to pass, that on one of those

days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him, with the elders,

2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.

8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: During the latter part of March, A. D. 29, the conversion of Zacchaeus occurred, and the telling of the parable of the ten pounds. The Triumphal Entry was on Sunday, April the Second. The cleansing of the Temple was on Monday following, and the argument concerning Christ's authority occurred on Tuesday—all taking place in Passion Week.

Place: The conversion of Zacchaeus and the teaching which immediately followed took place in Jericho. The other incidents of this lesson occurred in Jerusalem.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples, Zacchaeus and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To show how Christ dealt with those who listened to him, and those who opposed him.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ex. 22: 1; I Sam. 12: 3; II Sam. 12: 6.

T.—Lu. 13: 16; Rom. 4: 11-13; Gal. 3: 7.

W.—Matt. 25: 14; Mk. 13: 34.

T.—Job 15: 6; II Sam. 1: 16.

F.—Matt. 12: 37; 25: 26.

S.—Lu. 2: 14; 13: 35; Ps. 118: 26; Eph. 2: 14.

S.—Lu. 21: 20; Isa. 29: 3, 4; Jer. 6: 3, 6.

THE INTRODUCTION

Jesus was on his way from Peraea be-

yond Jordan to Jerusalem when the account of Zacchaeus' conversion occurred. He related to his disciples the parable of the ten pounds following this event. His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem was on Palm Sunday. He taught the people in the Temple sometime during that Sunday, the following Monday, and Tuesday till late in the afternoon.

I. ZACCHAEUS SEEKING THE LORD

(Lu. 19: 1-10)

Zacchaeus was a rich publican whose occupation was collecting taxes, or whose

business it was to supervise the collection of taxes in the district of Jericho. He resided at Jericho and was the chief of the tax-collectors of his district. Observe in this connection that Jesus and his disciples were on their way from Peraea, which was on the east side of Jordan, through Jericho to Jerusalem.

1. Why Zacchaeus Sought Jesus:

Upon hearing that Jesus was passing through Jericho, Zacchaeus desired to see him. Just why he was so determined to see Jesus is not definitely known. He had, in all probability, several reasons in his heart for wanting to see Jesus as he passed through his city. He had heard of his wonderful works; namely, how he had drawn about him his disciples; how the multitude continued to follow him; and how he had been healing all manner of diseases, and had been raising the dead to life. He had heard that Christ had been performing such deeds as no other man had ever performed. He desired to see this wonderful man. He, doubtless, sought that day the satisfaction of the longings of his heart for a higher, a purer, and a more godly life than he had been living. Surely, a man who has performed such wonders can satisfy my heart's desire. He can grant unto me what I need most to satisfy my longing soul. Thus, Zacchaeus, being low of stature and unable to see Jesus because of the press of the crowd, was ready to do the unusual thing—climb up into the sycamore tree. Whatever the people might say or do about his boyish act, he cared not, for his mind was bent upon seeing Jesus. Not mindful of his position as chief tax-collector, nor of the provoked jeers of the people at him, Zacchaeus was determined to see the Master face to face. Thus unashamed, he was willing to climb the sycamore tree, to put forth unusual efforts, to see the Prince of peace. If human hearts were as bent upon seeing Jesus face to face in the Day of Judgment,

as was Zacchaeus that day, more souls would be prepared for the ushering into the Haven of rest.

2. Zacchaeus Called by Jesus:

When Christ looked up and saw Zacchaeus, he said, **Make haste, and come down: for today I must abide at thy house.** I must have a talk with you. The Master saw that here was a man who was interested in seeing him, and one who had in his heart a longing to be satisfied. Archbishop Trench has in this connection a noteworthy thought, "Zacchaeus was as ripe fruit, which dropped into the Savior's lap at his first and lightest touch." Note, "Those that Christ calls must **come down**, must humble themselves, and not think to climb to heaven by any righteousness of their own; and they must **make haste** and come down, for delays are dangerous."—Matthew Henry.

3. Zacchaeus' Conversion:

Christ had a purpose in going into this publican's home. He was willing to pause for a little while from his journey toward Jerusalem in order that he might speak peace to the heart of a poor sinner. As well as Zacchaeus having a burning desire in his heart to see Jesus, so the blessed Savior had a mind to draw this despised sinner to a knowledge of God's saving grace. Consequently, the result of that visit, that heart to heart talk with Zacchaeus, was the conversion of this rich publican, a man who was despised by his own people. "The end of it all was genuine repentance on the part of Zacchaeus, and a public declaration that he desired to make right any wrongs of which he had been guilty during the days and years he had held this public office."—Peloubet's *Select Notes*. That is what vile sinners will do, when they have been saved by the blood of Christ. **For the Son of man is come**

to seek and to save that which was lost, verse 10. St. Luke's record of this striking incident is worthy of careful consideration by everyone, for it teaches that Jesus is willing to take time to save a sinner, however vile he may be, when he first seeks the Lord with all his heart.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What is it that is striking in the way Zacchaeus sought to see Jesus? Was it mere curiosity, or did he have a real purpose in seeing Jesus? What was Christ's purpose in taking the time to go to Zacchaeus' home? What reasons are there for a person to believe Zacchaeus was converted? What must a sinner do to be saved?

II. SOME TRUTHS THAT ARE TAUGHT IN THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

Lu. 19: 11-27)

1. The Charge—Occupy Till I Come:

In this topic we have the study of the parable of the ten pounds. A certain nobleman, upon arranging to go into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return, called his ten servants unto him. He delivered to them ten pounds. The Greek word *mina* is translated here **pounds**. A *mina* was the sixtieth part of a talent, containing one hundred denarii, and was thus equivalent to about \$20 in our money."—Peloubet's Select Notes. Remember, the nobleman said, **Occupy till I come**. Take the pounds which I have given you and trade with them till I return. You are to be busy until I come. You are to go forth to preach the Gospel. You are to win souls for the Master.

2. The Hatred of the Servants:

But his citizens hated him, verse 14a. We do not know why this nobleman was hated by those whom he had employed. It is true that when Christ came upon earth, many of his own people hated

him. Even one of his own followers betrayed him, and his most bitter enemies who were Jews crucified him. This nobleman, a type of Christ in the parable, was hated by those whom he had honored with a great responsibility to be of faithful service—occupy till he should come. Some men in the employ of great business enterprises have been known to hate their employers. Others of lesser stations in life have been known to shirk their responsibilities and to play unfair to the cause which they represent because they disliked those in charge of affairs.

3. The Entrustment of Funds and How They Should Be Used:

When the nobleman returned, the ten servants were brought before him that they might report what they had accomplished. Note, the report of only three of these servants are given. One had gained ten pounds, another had gained five pounds, and the third had hidden his pound in a napkin. The first two men were rewarded by being given authority over a corresponding number of cities. Each of these two servants was rewarded in proportion as he had traded and gained other pounds. But the third servant had not used his pound. He had not put it to use. Immediately, the master commanded the other servants to take from him that which had been given to him, and to give it to the man with the ten pounds. Note now the master's words: **I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him,** verse 26.

Those who have the will, the mind, the purpose, to put to use those things which have been given into their care and use, shall be given more for a greater increase; but those who have not the will, the energy, the courage, to put to use those things which have been

entrusted to their care and service for profitable gain, they shall be taken away and given to those who will use them wisely for the Master's cause. A buried talent or pound in the heart of man becomes worthless until it is put to use for the glory of God. Those who trade, work for Christ, shall be winners; but those who neglect to trade, bury their talents, shall be losers in the end. Every true convert for Christ is clear gain for the kingdom. All true ministers of God are profitable servants for Christ. They are traders, faithful soldiers of the cross, who are busily occupying till he comes. Surely, the apostle Paul was this kind of servant of the Lord. He used his time well in the service of the Master, hence, he was assured of the heavenly reward. Note his striking words: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. 15: 10a).

When properly trained for useful service in life, inborn human traits, talents, or capacities become profitable factors in the affairs of men, provided they are exercised wisely. But, if such human powers are allowed to lie idle, to be inactive for any great length of time, such powers will waste away, become so weakened that they are in-effective. Thus time and inactivity take away that which once was strong and effective. Just so with the spiritual powers of a child of God, when he wilfully neglects to exercise his gift, his zeal, his yearning for lost souls for the Kingdom of God. Hence, time and inactivity have taken away that which he once possessed with great power.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the charge which the nobleman gave his servants as he was about to take his journey? How did they meet this challenge? How should a person use things entrusted to his care and keeping? How are individuals rewarded in this life and in the life to come for the way they act here?

III. JESUS IN JERUSALEM

(Lu. 19: 28-48)

Before entering upon this study of Jesus in Jerusalem, as recorded in verses 28 through 48, may the student note that the beautiful anointing of Christ by Mary of Bethany on Saturday evening at Simon's house occurred between the utterance of the parable of the ten pounds studied in the previous topic and the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. For more complete details of that interesting event, read Matthew 26: 6-13; Mark 14: 3-9; John 11: 55-12: 11.

1. Christ's Triumphal Entry:

On Sunday Christ, together with his disciples and the multitude, marched from Bethany into the city of Jerusalem. It was on Sunday of Passion Week; that is, the week in which Jesus died. Thus, it is called the week of his Passion; a word which meant originally "suffering." He sent two of his disciples to the small village of Bethphage to secure for him the ass upon which he was to ride into Jerusalem. Remember, this was "a part of the correct scriptural ritual just as his riding into Jerusalem and the Temple was." Jesus presented himself on this Triumphal Entry exactly as the Scriptures said that he would do (Zach. 9: 9). Note that his admirers placed garments upon the back of the beast for the Messiah to sit upon as a token of their veneration for him. They also laid palm branches upon the pathway for the ass to walk on as a sign of royalty, not allowing the beast to soil his feet by treading upon the common earth.

Moreover, the whole multitude began to sing as they descended the mount of Olives, rejoicing and praising God for all the mighty works that they had seen, and saying, **Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.** But in this multitude, it is to be observed

that there were some very orthodox Pharisees who were not only not willing to acclaim him as the blessed Messiah, but also they deliberately asked Jesus to stop the throng from singing praises to his great name. He replied in profound thought that if the people did not shout forth their praises (using a figure of speech taken from Hab. 2: 11), the very stones would cry out. People today should really enjoy their religion. They should, in a sense of true worship, praise God from the very depths of their souls. But, how barren some people seem!

2. Christ's Sorrow for Jerusalem:

When Jesus had come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, verse 41b. Three times only do we find reference to his weeping: (1) once at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11: 35); (2) once here as he beheld the city doomed to destruction; and (3) a general reference (Heb. 5: 7) to his strong crying and tears in relation to his prayers, and especially with reference to his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Fore-seeing the destruction that would in a few short years come to the city and to its people, Jesus had reason to weep over it, for just 40 years afterwards, in A. D. 70, the city was destroyed under the siege of Titus and his Roman soldiers. Just as Jesus had prophesied its destruction, just so it was accomplished by the Roman soldiers. So completely was it destroyed that the historian Josephus wrote, "It was so frightfully desolated by the Roman siege that any Jew coming suddenly upon it would have asked what place it was."

But note, Jesus wept in the midst of this multitude singing, "Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," not over his pending doom on the cross just five days hence, but for the people, yes, for the doom which they were preparing for the great city, for their children, and for themselves. That is why he wept over the city. Just so

today he weeps over the doomed condition of lost sinners who will not repent of their sins, and come to him.

3. Christ in the Temple:

The cleansing and the teaching were the two noteworthy things which Jesus did in the Temple. Before much teaching of a spiritual nature can be applied to the human heart there must be a cleansing of the impurities of the heart. Upon entering the Temple, Jesus began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought. He was filled with indignation when he saw them making it a place of business. He said, *It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but you have made it a den of thieves.* This is a holy place for prayer, and for worship, not for selling and buying, and conducting business matters with those who come to the city. Note here, the first cleansing of the Temple is recorded only in John 2: 13-17. This second cleansing is recorded also in Matthew 21: 13-17, and in Mark 11: 15-19. Pilgrims from all parts of the world came to Jerusalem to keep the Passover feast, and at this annual feast the city was crowded to excess. "For the convenience of the visitors, one of the courts of the Temple was set apart for a market, where they could buy what animals they needed for the sacrifice."—Thomas M. Lindsay.

For example, What about modern churches today using their basement dining rooms on certain occasions to give elaborate dinners for the purpose of raising funds for God's work? Could not the profits from such dinners be given directly into the church treasury at a specially arranged worship service in which their gifts might be dedicated on God's altar? Cannot God get greater glory from a truly dedicatory service in which Christians lay their gifts on the altar, than from a social feast given in his house for the purpose of social intercourse and profit making? We be-

lieve he can. Could Jerusalem not have provided for its visitors at the Passover ample markets for the purchase of animals for the sacrifice other than the Temple court for buying and selling, thus leaving the holy place quiet and sacred for visitors and others to enter for holy worship to Almighty God? These questions are given here for personal consideration.

And he taught daily in the Temple. Jesus taught the people the truth of the Scriptures. He expounded to them the way of eternal life. "From Sunday on, Jesus Christ taught in the Temple, till he left it for good, Tuesday toward evening. He spent his nights either at Bethany or elsewhere outside of the city, in order to prevent any arrest before time."—R. C. H. Lenski. Although the chief priests, the scribes and the chief

people sought to kill Jesus, all the people were very attentive to hear him, verse 48b. He had a message vital and gripping for all who had gathered into the city to worship the true and living God. It was the message of eternal life.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe Christ's triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem. Why did he weep over the city? Why did Christ drive out of the Temple those that were making merchandise of the Lord's house? How did the people receive his teaching in the Temple?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
A Study Concerning Christ's Authority.
—Lu. 20: 1-8; Matt. 21: 23; Ac. 4: 7; 7: 27; Lu. 7: 29; Matt. 14: 5; 21: 26.

Lesson Ten for Sunday, March 9, 1941

Christ Rejected (Luke 20: 9—21: 38)

Golden Text: Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Matt. 5: 11.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

Luke 20:

9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

13 Then said the lord of the vineyard,

What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

14. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is

become the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for

they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30.

Place: The events of this chapter, down to chapter 21: 5, took place in Jerusalem. The Olivet discourse was given on the Mount of Olives.

Persons: Jesus, his disciples and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To show the neglect of God's kingdom and the rejection of his Son on the part of Israel.

(2). To set forth individual responsibility to God and man, and to teach the truth of the resurrection.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 21: 33; Mk. 12:1.

T.—Ps. 118: 22; Matt. 21: 42.

W.—Matt. 22: 15, 16; Mk. 12:14.

T.—Matt. 22: 23; Mk. 12: 18; Ac. 23: 6, 8.

F.—Deut. 25: 5; Rom. 8: 23; I Cor. 15: 42, 49, 52.

S.—I Jon. 3: 2; Ex. 3: 6.

S.—Rom. 6: 10, 11.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with the failure of Israel in not abiding by God's commands, as brought out in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. It has to do with Jesus' teaching also regarding the right way people are to pay their respects to God and man. There is set forth here Christ's teaching to the Sadducees concerning the question of marriage in heaven, the resurrection, and the immortality of the soul. Bible students will find this lesson to be of personal value to them.

I. THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

(Lu. 20: 9-18)

1. The Husbandmen Entrusted with the Vineyard:

In this parable almost all Bible students will agree that the vineyard and the husbandmen together represent Israel. As a symbol of the Jewish people, the use of the vine is found in Isa. 5: 1-7, and also in Jer. 2: 21. The vineyard, therefore, is represented here as the emblem of the Jewish people and their leaders; namely, the Rabbis, Elders, and Teachers, as the wicked cultivators of the vineyard. "If that be so, the servants sent by the owner for fruit are the prophets and others (like John the Baptist) who came and suffered all kinds of abuse and maltreatment."—George Christie. "Listen to Isaiah's well-known story of the vineyard, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, which is the house of Israel."—Professor Bruce. This vineyard was to have been kept in a fruitful condition so that when the master came he would have found it yielding abundance of fruit for him.

2. They Beat the Lord's Servants:

He sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard, verse 10a. After the many works done by the prophets in the behalf of Israel, the heavenly Father looked for fruits of gratitude and true worship for the wonderful favors which he had bestowed upon the people. Note the prophet Isaiah's words here: "He looked that it (his vineyard) should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" (Isa. 5: 2). Fruits of righteousness, grapes in abundance for the Master's use, should have been Israel's great contribution to God for his goodness, but the spiritual harvest was very poor. In the story we observe that the husbandmen beat the first and the second servants, and sent them away empty. They wounded the third servant and cast him out. Remember, these servants of God represent the Old Testament prophets whose toils, trials and fate were painted in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Note, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword" (Heb. 11: 37a). It is plain from the history of Israel that the Israelites had "utterly lost sight of the end of Israel's calling." They were so hard of heart that they actually slew some of God's prophets to get them out of the way. Remember, the Jews sent Christ to his horrible death on the cross only a few days after he had spoken this parable.

3. Their Punishment:

"If the husbandmen here referred to are the ecclesiastical leaders of Israel, who should have been godly men, warmly welcoming the Messiah, instead of partaking in his death, then the punishment here predicted was definitely accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus A. D., 70."—Peloubet's

Select Notes. The expression, "will give vineyard unto others," refers to the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles, after the Jews had refused it. When Christ had finished relating this parable to them, note the cry of these people, **God forbid**. They hated to hear Christ say that certain punishment would come upon them, and that the vineyard would be given to others.

4. The Parable Applied to Christ:

Then followed Christ's reply to them in these words, What is this then that is written, **The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?** What does it mean? What is its reference? Jesus here claims to be the heir of God—the Son and the Heir. With reference to this point, Dr. Scofield has given a fine explanation in the following quotation:

"Christ, as the stone, is revealed in a three-fold way—to Israel, as a rock of offence, a stumbling stone (Isaiah 8: 14, 15; Romans 9: 32, 33; I Cor. 1: 23; I Peter 2: 8); to the Church, Christ is the foundation stone and the head of the corner (I Cor. 3: 11; Ephesians 2: 20-23; I Peter 2: 4, 5); to the Gentile world powers, He will be the smiting stone of destruction (Daniel 2: 34)."

Christ has become the Head of the race of men, and in him we may be led on to eternal salvation, for his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. We as Christians are to go forth in his vineyard and bear fruit to the glory of God.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What does the vineyard represent in this parable? Who were the husbandmen? Who are the servants, and why were they beaten? What is the reference as to the punishment which Jesus said would come? How is this parable applied to Christ as the corner stone?

II. THE QUESTION OF PAYING TRIBUTE MONEY

(Lu. 20: 19-26)

It is to be remembered that the people had exalted Jesus, and that they were looking upon him as the great Messiah. Many of them had seen him perform his marvelous works, and believed on him as the Son of God.

1. Hatred toward Christ:

The chief priests and the scribes were bitter enemies of Christ, and sought opportunity to have him put to death. They had longed to arrest him on some capital charge, but they feared the people would rise up against them. The Sanhedrin, the great council of the Jews, manifested a bitter feeling against Christ, and, since they felt their power and influence, they were seeking the very first chance to apprehend and bring him to trial. "The reason that the scribes and the chief priests wanted to lay hands upon the Lord was not that He had done anything wrong, not that He was telling a lie, but that He was telling the truth; not that He was falsely accusing the religious leaders of His day, but that He was undeniably exposing their sinfulness."—*Peloubet's Select Notes*. These self-righteous leaders made a pretense of doing the right thing in persecuting and denouncing Jesus when they were prompted by the very spirit of Satan himself. Their whole device was nothing less than a contradiction of all true principles. It was actuated by foul deception, cunning craftiness, spiritual blindness and cowardly hypocrisy. How shocking that such iniquitous people should be allowed to put the Son of God to death! But Satan used them as his agents to bring it about.

2. The Question Concerning Paying Tribute:

Instead of approaching Christ on the

principles of justice and fair play, these bitter Pharisees and scribes sent forth spies, which should feign (pretend) themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, verse 20a. Thus, in the manner of deception and cowardliness, these hypocritical Pharisees used these spies that they might find some pretense for arresting Jesus. Accordingly, with shrewd craftiness these spies put to him this question: **Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? Should our people pay the Roman tax or not? Jesus perceived their craftiness, and said, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.**

"This 'tribute' was a capitation tax—a denarius a head assessed on the whole population, the publicans who farmed it being answerable for it to the Roman treasury. As a direct personal tax it was most unpopular, and was looked on by scrupulous legalists and the more zealous Jews as involving a greater humiliation than the ordinary import or export customs duties."—*The Pulpit Commentary*.

This tax occasioned popular tumults at times among some of the Israelites, as is seen in the case of Judas of Galilee (Acts 5: 37). Christ's answer had a two-fold meaning; namely, (1) individual responsibility due to society for the maintenance of law and order; and (2) true worship and obedience due to Almighty God. How fitting was this answer given to them! Jesus knows not only the intent of their hearts in asking the question, but also the great need of their exercising a better spirit toward others and of living closer to the Lord. His questioners marvelled at his answer, but they held their peace. If Jesus had answered in the affirmative, then the Pharisees would have used the decision as a means for undermining his influence with the people, for they hated the tax. If, on the other hand, Christ had

said the payment of tribute money was unlawful, then the Herodians would have immediately denounced him before their Roman friends as one who was teaching the people lessons of sedition. In that event, Pilate and the officials of Rome would have had a good reason to have punished him. But Christ answered the question, with profound wisdom, according to the will of God. He drove the lesson home to them.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did the scribes and the Pharisees hate Christ? How did these enemies of Jesus seek to entrap him? How did he answer them?

III. THE QUESTION CONCERNING MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN

(Lu. 20: 27-38)

The Sadducees who asked Jesus this question concerning marriage in heaven were a small, but very wealthy and powerful sect of priestly aristocracy. They were supported by Temple dues and regarded religion as a matter of profitable living. They not only did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, but denied "the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and the punishments of another life." They acknowledge the five books of Moses (The Pentateuch) as Divine, but refused to see in them any proof of the resurrection. Their question to Je-

sus seems to have been put with scorn; for, while the Pharisees manifested bitter hatred for him, the Sadducees looked upon him rather with contempt.

After Jesus had answered the question with profound truth, he emphasized the fact that the writings of Moses declared that the dead are raised. He brought out the thought that "Even he, Moses, is singularly clear and definite in this point of the resurrection."—**The Pulpit Commentary.** On this point, Josephus wrote, "They who die for God's sake live unto God as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs." It is to be remembered that this discourse of Jesus is recorded both in Matthew 22: 23-33, and in Mark 12: 18-27.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Who were the Sadducees and what did they believe concerning the resurrection, and life after death? How did Jesus answer their silly question? What books in the Bible did they acknowledge as Divine?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Christ's Discourse on the Mount of Olives Regarding His Return.—Lu. 21: 5-36; Mk. 13: 9; Ae. 4: 3; 12: 4; Rev. 2: 10; Matt. 24: 15; Mk. 13: 14; Dan. 9: 26, 27; Ze. 11: 1; Dan. 9: 27; 12: 7; Rom. 11: 25; Matt. 24: 29; Mk. 13: 24; II Pet. 3: 10, 12; Matt. 24: 30; Rev. 1: 7; 14: 14.

Lesson Eleven for Sunday, March 16, 1941

The Lord's Supper

(Luke 22)

Golden Text: For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. I Cor. 11: 26.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 22:

14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15 And he said unto them, With de-

sire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and break it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

23 And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations:

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: Judas bargained with the Jewish leaders on Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30, to betray the Lord. The Lord's Supper took place on Thursday evening, April 6.

Place: The Lord's Supper was observed in an upper room in Jerusalem. It is not definitely known where this upper room was located.

Persons: Jesus and his disciples.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To set forth the teaching of Christ, concerning the Lord's Supper, the betrayal, Peter's denial, and the pre-eminence of service in God's kingdom.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 26: 17; Mk. 14: 12.

T.—Matt. 26: 20; Mk. 14: 17.

W.—Lu. 14: 15; Ac. 10: 41; Rev. 19: 9.

T.—Matt. 26: 29; Mk. 14: 25.

F.—Matt. 26: 26; Mk. 14: 22; I Cor. 11: 24; 10: 16.

S.—Matt. 26: 2; Mk. 14: 1; Ps. 2: 2; Jon. 11: 47.

S.—Ac. 4: 27; Jon. 13: 2, 27.

THE INTRODUCTION

Our lesson today deals with the last Passover which Jesus observed with his disciples. The Lord's Supper is described as Christ's memorial which he instituted for his followers to observe in remembrance of him. Judas' purpose, plan and betrayal of Christ, into the

hands of the mob, has been given in this lesson following the events of the supper, as logical sequence of events that took place that Thursday night.

I. THE LAST PASSOVER CELEBRATED BY OUR LORD

(Lu. 22: 7—18)

The Passover feast was a memorial of the great deliverance from bondage of the Jewish people from Egypt. It had been observed by them each year in Jerusalem on the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, of April. It had been the custom for years of great throngs of the Jewish people to go up to Jerusalem from various sections of Palestine to observe this Annual feast. Jesus and his disciples had been ac-

customed to celebrating this memorial of the Jews.

1. The Preparation:

Christ sent on Thursday, the day of the preparation of the feast, Peter and John to Jerusalem for the purpose of preparing for him the passover supper. Jesus instructed these disciples to go into the city, and, upon meeting a man with a pitcher of water, to follow him into the house. Ask him to show you the guestchamber, then you prepare for the feast. Now, it is believed by many Bible scholars that the owner of the house was a disciple of Jesus. It is also believed that this man had been previously requested to keep or set apart this guestchamber for such an occasion for our Lord. We are to remember that, from the biblical accounts concerning this great Annual feast, all Jerusalem was crowded each year with throngs of people who had gathered there to celebrate the Passover feast. Thus, it is supposed that all available room in the city would be occupied unless some previous reservation had been made

2. The Passover Supper:

And when the hour was come, (at evening) he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him, verse 14. Jesus and his disciples must have felt the deep sacredness of the occasion, as they were assembled alone in the Upper Room for this solemn feast. He said, **With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.** Indeed it was a solemn occasion, for Jesus knew he would not eat any more of it, **until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.** Moreover, his disciples must know that he must die at this time, and that this would be the last Passover supper which they would eat with him.

Moreover, may we not remember that Christ's love for all humanity is indeed great, and that he is ever desirous for us to open our heart's door that he

may come in to sup with us and we with him. As a striking description of the way the Jewish people observed the Passover feast, we are giving here Thomas M. Lindsay's explanation of it:

"The Passover was observed among the Jews in the time of our Lord in the following fashion:—The company having taken their places, two or three flat cakes or thin biscuits of unleavened bread (Ex. 12: 18), and four cups of red wine mixed with water, being on the table before the master of the feast—(1) He took one of the cups, called the cup of consecration, and 'gave thanks,' tasted the cup, and passed it round. (2) Water was then brought in, and first the president and then the others washed. (3) The table was then set with the bitter herbs (lettuce, endive, beet, succory, and horehound), the sauce called charoseth (made of dates, raisins, figs, vinegar, etc., poured and mixed together), and the paschal lamb. (4) After the Thanksgiving, the president took a portion of the bitter herbs, about 'the size of an olive,' and, dipping it in the sauce, ate it, as did the others. (5) The second cup of wine was filled, and then followed the haggadah or showing forth (I Cor. 11: 26). A child or proselyte person asked, what mean ye by this service? (Ex. 12: 26), and the president answered in prescribed fashion at great length. The first part of Hallel (Ps. 113: 114) was sung, and the second cup was solemnly drunk. (6) The president again washed his hands, and, taking two of the cakes of unleavened bread, broke them, gave thanks, and distributed them to the company, each of whom took a portion, dipped it in the sauce, and ate it. . . . (7) The paschal lamb was then eaten. (8) After thanksgiving the third cup or cup of blessing (I Cor. 10: 16), was handed round. (9) Thanks was given for the food received; the fourth cup, the cup of joy, was drunk, the second part of the Hallel (Ps. 115: 118) was sung, and the company separated."

CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the Passover feast of the Jews? When and how did the Jewish people observe it in Christ's day? Why did Christ desire to observe the feast before he should suffer death?

II. CHRIST INSTITUTED THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Lu. 22: 19, 20)

The Lord's Supper is not to be confused with the Passover supper, as observed by the Jews, and as described in the foregoing topic. It is generally agreed by many Bible students and commentators that Jesus and his disciples observed in the Upper Room that evening the Passover feast before he instituted the Lord's Supper.

1. Giving Thanks:

He took bread and gave thanks. "The word here translated 'giving thanks' is the work from which we directly derive our English word **eucharist**, which is one of the most prominent names by which the Lord's Supper is designated. We speak of it as Holy Communion, the Communion Service, the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist."—Peloubet's *Select Notes*. Jesus meant for it, the Lord's Supper, to be an occasion of thanksgiving and remembrance. Thus, he set the example of giving thanks to the heavenly Father that his followers might observe it in this way. We are to be thankful for God's Son, the Bread of eternal life, and remember him.

2. His Body:

This is my body. This bread is symbol of my body which shall be offered up for you. It is given for you. Christ knew that it was necessary that he should die. Hence, he uses this symbol from ordinary life to express figuratively his approaching death. As his disciples partook of this symbol of his body, he asked that they do it in remembrance of him. They were to remember that he

was instituting the Lord's Supper, and that his disciples everywhere in future time should observe it in remembrance of him. They were to remind themselves and others of the redemption which he had won by his death on the cross for the sins of the world.

3. The Cup:

This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you, verse 20b. Here Christ assured his disciples that this cup of wine was the symbol of his blood which would be shed for them—for the sins of the world. We are taught in the book to the Hebrews that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Ch. 9: 22). Then, again in reference to Christ's sacrifice, we read, "But now once in the end of the world (ages) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9: 26b). St. Matthew renders this thought in these words, "for the remission of sins" (Ch. 26: 28). The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (I Cor. 11: 26).

4. Washing the Disciples' Feet:

In John's Gospel we read, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet" (Ch. 13: 4, 5). This act of Christ was an humble service, setting forth an example for his disciples to follow after him. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you, verses 14 and 15. The bread and the wine were symbols of his body which was ready to be offered up on the cross for their redemption, for the sins of the world. Now, his act of lowly service in washing his disciples' feet that night after supper was to give them an example of Chris-

tian service which they should perform after he would be taken away from them. Moreover, he said, "The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him," verse 16. If I your Lord and Master have set this example of Christian service, you should also do it. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them, verse 17.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Call for class discussion on the different parts of the Lord's Supper. What does Jesus' washing the disciples' feet teach? Why did he say they should follow his example?

III. JUDAS ENTERED INTO AN AGREEMENT TO BETRAY CHRIST

(Lu. 22: 1-6)

Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot. Satan entered into the heart of Judas, prepared him as the one to open the way for the betrayal, and then led him to the chief priests and captains to lay the plans for the arrest of his Master. Judas went to them (they did not go to him), and told them how he might betray him unto them. He knew all the time how they hated his Lord, and how desirous they were to put him away; but, instead of using his influence to shield him, he treacherously led the way for his arrest. Think what a cowardly act! What an insult to Christ! After he had followed his Master for three years, and had held the responsible position as treasurer for the group, now he goes freely to bargain with the chief priests and captains to sell his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. In all the world's history there is recorded no greater act of treason. Satan never moved any other human being to commit a more tragic crime.

These chief priests and captains received him with gladness, but were completely surprised. They had no thought

of such a thing. One of Christ's own followers coming to them with the help they most needed. But when he asked them, "What will ye give me?" (Matt. 26: 15), they quickly agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. This was about \$20 in American money—the price given in that day for the meanest slave. Think how pleased these priests and captains were to have one of the Lord's disciples willing to betray him to them for the meager sum of twenty dollars!

Note his promise to them. He promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude, verse 6. He had completely sold himself to the Devil. He pledged himself to them to find the best opportunity in the absence of the multitude to betray Jesus into their hands. They feared the people, a stir, an uprising, hence they were seeking to accomplish the heinous deed in the dark, where the people could not see them. Judas was their agent, filled with satanic craftiness, to accomplish the task for them. Think how crafty it seemed to them! Yes, the very man they needed to do the work. How shameful it often is that evil-minded men, rather than run the risk of doing the dirty act themselves, will pay sums of money to get others to commit the crimes which they want committed! Such acts of treason and perpetration often happen today in our own country.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What steps did Judas take to betray Christ? What was the agreement between Judas and the chief priests and captains? Then, what did Judas promise them that he would do? How do some people today plot against others for gain?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Christ's Words to His Disciples after the Supper.—Lu. 22: 21-38; Matt. 26: 21-25; Mk. 14: 18-21; Jon. 13: 21-30.

Lesson Twelve for Sunday, March 23, 1941

Jesus Condemned and Crucified

(Luke 22: 39—23: 56)

Golden Text: What shall I do then with Jesus which is called the Christ? Matt. 27: 22a.

THE PRINTED TEXT*(Authorized Version)***Luke 23:**

13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him:

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time, Why? what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and the chief priests prevailed.

24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

32 And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: Thursday evening, April 6, and Friday, April 7, A. D. 30.

Place: The garden of Gethsemane, the Palace of Pilate and Calvary.

Persons: Christ, his disciples, the mob, the Sanhedrin Council, and the crowd of people at the place of Crucifixion.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To teach the bitter hatred set against Jesus by his opponents, and to show his spirit of forgiveness and meekness on the cross.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 27: 23; Mk. 15: 14.

T.—Matt. 27: 15; Mk. 15: 6; Jo. 18: 39.

W.—Matt. 27: 26; Mk. 15: 15; Jo. 19:

16.

T.—Matt. 27: 32; Mk. 15: 21.

F.—Isa. 53: 12; Matt. 27: 38.

S.—Matt. 27: 33; Mk. 15: 22; Jon. 19: 17, 18.

S.—Mk. 15: 26; Jo. 19: 19.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson treats in a brief way the

cruelty of the cross. For a fuller study and a more definite understanding of the several events that took place at the cross of Calvary, we refer the student to the Scripture references given in the Daily Bible Readings for this lesson. As this subject is one of great interest for most Bible students, it is hoped that all members of the Adult and Young People's classes will make a special study of the lesson.

I. JESUS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE FOR TRIAL

(Lu. 23: 1-7)

When Judas led the chief priests and the captains to the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was praying that Thursday night, they captured him there, and led him away to the city to be tried. In the study of this lesson, the student is to understand that Jesus was first condemned to death that night by the Sanhedrin, (See Lu. 22: 66-71) the great Jewish Council, but that it was necessary to have him condemned by Pilate also, so that the sentence might be executed, for Pilate only, not the Sanhedrin, had the power to pronounce the death sentence. Thus, his captors led him from the Council to Pilate for him to pronounce his decision. Remember, Pontius Pilate had been appointed by Tiberius Claudius Nero, Emperor at Rome, as procurator or governor of Judea, (A. D. 26-36). He was the man in charge as governor to handle cases of disobedience against the Roman authority in Judea.

1. Charges against Jesus:

Jesus' accusers charged him falsely before Pilate with the following irregularities: (1) he claims to be a king; (2) forbidding to give tribute to Caesar; that is, opposing the paying of taxes to the Roman authorities; (3) that he had been stirring up the people, even as far as Galilee; and (4) teaching throughout all Jewry his doctrine against the

Roman power. This led Pilate to ask him the question, *Art Thou the king of the Jews?* But Christ replied, *Thou sayest it.* Not to be an earthly king but to be King Emmanuel was his purpose that he might draw all men unto him. When Pilate had ceased examining Christ, he was satisfied that he had done no wrong, and he then said to the chief priests and the captains, *I find no fault in this man.* But his accusers insisted all the more to have him put to death. Said they, *He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.* He has spread his teachings throughout Galilee and Judea, and we want him put to death. We want him put out of the way. Now, when Pilate learned he was of Galilee, and that he belonged under king Herod's jurisdiction, he told his accusers to take him to Herod who was at that time in Jerusalem.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why was Jesus taken before Pilate for trial? What was Pilate's decision of the matter?

II THE TRIAL BEFORE HEROD ANTIPAS

(Lu. 23: 8-12)

At Pilate's suggestion, the chief priests and the captains led Jesus from Pilate's Hall to Herod Antipas, the second son of Herod the Great. He was tetrarch of Perea and Galilee from 4 B. C. to A. D. 39. He was a Roman official over these districts as Pilate was over Judea. It was he who had put to death John the Baptist for preaching against his wickedness. Let us observe also that it was he who had wished to see Jesus. Accordingly, when Jesus was suddenly brought before him, he was gratified indeed, but what he had expected to behold that day was denied him—the performance of some miracle by the Master. Upon learning just why Jesus was brought before him, he proceeded to question him in many words

concerning what he had done. But Jesus made no reply to him. "What could Jesus say to a heart of stone like Herod's? Nothing. Words would have been wasted."—*Peloubet's Select Notes*. Silence, if anything, would suffice to awaken in this man's vile heart any desire for right and justice for him. But, "The decision which determined his fate was made years before he saw the face of Jesus. It was too late then, Christ had no word for him."—*W. M. Clow*.

Herod with his men of war set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, verse 11. Upon finding no just cause to condemn him as a criminal, Herod dismissed the case. But the chief priests and scribes pressed their accusations more vehemently against him. Doubtless to please them, and to satisfy his own feeling against him, Herod had him arrayed in a bright robe and mocked him. Godet has summed up the situation in these words: "Jesus was to Herod Antipus what a juggler is to a sated court—an object of curiosity. But Jesus did not lend himself to such a part; had neither words nor miracles for a man so disposed." Herod treated Jesus, not as some vile criminal, but as a mischievous religious enthusiast who had been stirring up the people in Galilee and Judea. To him Christ was worthy only of contempt and scorn. Thus, he had Jesus arrayed in a gorgeous robe—"bright raiment, such as Jewish kings and Roman nobles wore on great occasions." (See *The Pulpit Commentary*). This mocking was, it is believed by some, a vindictive retaliation for the words which Jesus had spoken of him before to the Pharisees, "Go ye and tell that fox"—Herod, (See Luke 13: 32). With this show of contempt and humiliation, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate for final disposition of the case.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Pilate send Jesus to Herod for trial? What was Herod's disposition of the case?

III. JESUS BEFORE PILATE THE SECOND TIME

(Lu. 23: 13-25)

When they brought Jesus back for the second trial, Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people. He told them that he had not found any fault in Jesus the first time, and that Herod had found no fault in him either, for he sent him back unaccused. He has done nothing worthy of death, nothing so shocking as the things whereof you have accused him. Thus, this was the Roman governor's deliberate judgment delivered before them. But the cry, **Crucify him! Away with him!** rang in his ears. Pilate determined to scourge him and let him go. Note the cruel scourging with leather thongs which brought stripes and blood upon his back. It was tragically unjust and most cruel for him to subject the only begotten Son of God to such horrible punishment which was only to satisfy the clamor of the bitter enemies of Jesus. But this awful treatment did not satisfy their angry cries. They continued crying, **Away with him! Crucify him!** Release unto us Barabbas, the criminal, but put Jesus to death.

"This man Barabbas was a notorious criminal who had had an insurrection in Jerusalem, and had actually been guilty of the rebellion against Rome with which the Sanhedrin charged Jesus, and the demand for his release manifested the mockery of their accusation."—*Thomas M. Lindsay*. He was styled as a robber and a murderer, and thus had been thrust in prison. Note, on certain occasions, it was custom for the Roman authority to release one of the prisoners. Now, Pilate, finding that all his devices to liberate Jesus had failed, he consented to the request that Barabbas be released and Jesus to be crucified. Note this fact: Christ's enemies would not give up; they persisted in their clamor for his blood. Today Satan is

waging his ceaseless warfare against the innocent, against those who would do right, and against all of God's children, challenging them to follow him. Just so, Pilate yielded to the clamor of Satan's crowd and delivered the Son of God into the hands of sinful men to be crucified. (For full details, read Matt. 27; Mark 15; and John 19.)

And Pilate gave sentence (consent) that it should be as they required, verse 24. "This sums up the result of the last charge of the Sanhedrin. Pilate's selfish fears for himself overpowered all sense of reverence, awe, and justice."—*The Pulpit Commentary*. When the clamoring Sanhedrinists had won their point, there was no further discussion. Barabbas was released, and Jesus was delivered up to the will of his enemies to be crucified. Satan had won the victory, but Pilate had bitterly failed to wash his hands clean of the blood of "this just man."

CLASS DISCUSSION: What steps did Pilate take to satisfy the clamoring Sanhedrinists? What truth is brought out here relative to the Devil's persistence in his efforts to get people to do his bidding? Discuss the injustice of releasing Barabbas, the criminal, and delivering up Jesus to be crucified.

IV. CHRIST ON THE CROSS

(Lu. 23: 33-49)

For parallel accounts of the crucifixion, we refer the student to Matt. 27: 32-56; Mk. 15: 21-41; and Jno. 19: 16b-37.

1. Jesus Crucified with Two Criminals:

And when they came unto the place which is called the skull, they crucified him, verse 33a. Let us note first that Jesus was crucified at a place called Calvary—the Greek name for Golgotha, the place of a skull. There he was crucified with two malefactors, one on the right and the other on the left. It was a painful and shameful death, both hands

and feet nailed to the cross as it lay upon the ground, and then, it being lifted up, was fastened in upright position into the earth. What a terrible thing it was for the Son of God to die in this most shameful way! It was an utter scandal and disgrace to Pilate, the scribes, the high-ranking priests and rulers of the Jewish people. Think what a tragedy these people had committed against the Man who had spent nights in prayer for the sins of the world, who had healed all manner of diseases, and who had spent days of patient teaching that sinful men might turn unto God, repent of their sins and be saved. Think how shamefully and cruelly he was treated as a vile transgressor!

2. Parting of his Garments and Mocking of the Multitude:

They parted his garments. The soldiers who were employed in the execution seized his garments, casting lots to see who would get them. These soldiers had more concern about his garments, and who should receive them than they did about his agony on the cross. How strange such barbarity should be shown in the human heart! Note how the multitude mocked him. They derided him, casting scorn and contempt, saying, **He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ.** As a further means of ridicule and derision, they placed a superscription over him written in large letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.** Think of the bitter challenge which they put to him to save himself from the cross, when he was saving others by the cross. Thus they made all manner of sport of Jesus as he was suffering the bitter agonies of the cross.

3. The Two Malefactors:

One of the malefactors railed (used reproachful language) **on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and**

us. Such was the challenge of the criminal who deserved just punishment for his crime to the innocent Christ who was suffering a like death because of the bitter enmity which his enemies held against him. With the question of doubt in his heart, and possessing the impenitent spirit toward Christ, this malefactor represents the world beset with sin and standing impenitent before God. But the other malefactor expressed a different attitude. He admitted his guilt and accepted his punishment as just. Moreover, he confessed faith in Christ and asked for forgiveness of his sins. He represents those who are brought face to face with their sins, and who seek forgiveness at the throne of grace. Jesus said to this malefactor, **To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.** You shall

receive the heavenly reward, for you have acknowledged your sin, and have begged forgiveness of it. All who seek pardon and forgiveness of their transgressions at the throne of grace will be forgiven by Christ Jesus the Lord.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the soldiers' attitude upon nailing Christ on the cross? How did the multitude conduct themselves? What was the attitude of the two malefactors? What was Jesus' attitude toward his enemies?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Entombment of Christ's Body.—Lu. 23: 50-56; Matt. 27: 57; Mk. 15: 42; Jo. 19: 38; Lu. 2: 25, 38; Mk. 15: 43; Isa. 53: 9; Matt. 27: 59; Mk. 15: 46; Ex. 20: 10; Mk. 16: 1.

Lesson Thirteen for Sunday, March 30, 1941

Christ's Commission

(Luke 24: 36-53)

Golden Text: Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you. Lu. 24: 49a.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 24:

36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.

43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day;

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in

the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he bless-

ed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: Sunday evening, April 9, the day of the Resurrection. It is not certain when the events took place in verses 44-49, but during the last two weeks of April, or the first two weeks in May. The ascension occurred on Thursday, May 18, A. D. 30.

Place: The place where Jesus appeared to the ten disciples was in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. We do not know where the events in verses 44-49 took place. The ascension took place at Bethany, on the western slope of the Mount of Olives.

Persons: Jesus his disciples and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To show the Divine power of the Lord Jesus as manifested in his appearing to and ascending from his disciples.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mk. 16: 14; Jo. 20: 19; I Cor. 15: 5.

T.—Jo. 20: 20, 27; 21: 5; Ac. 10: 41.

W.—Ps. 22: 1-31; Isa. 50: 6.

T.—Ac. 17: 3; Isa. 49: 6, 22.

F.—Jer. 31: 34; Mi. 4: 2; Mal. 1: 11.

S.—Jo. 15: 27; Ac. 1: 8, 22; 2: 32.

S.—Isa 44: 3; Joel. 2: 28; Jo. 14: 16, 26; Ac. 1: 4.

THE INTRODUCTION

Today's lesson has to do with Christ's appearances to his disciples and others after He arose from the grave. The teaching which He gave upon the different occasions of the forty days before his ascension is simply wonderful. The second part of the lesson deals with his prophetic words concerning the Great Commission to his disciples before his Ascension, out near Bethany, to God in glory. It is indeed a profound study for every true lover of Christ, and of the Christian Church. May the student drink deeply of these spiritual values in his study of this lesson.

I. CHRIST'S APPEARANCE ON THE EVENING OF HIS RESURRECTION TO HIS DISCIPLES

(Lu. 24: 36-43)

In the beginning of this lesson, we are listing in chronological order, for the convenience of the students of the Adult and Young People's classes, the ten post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, which occurred between the morning of his resurrection and the day of his Ascension to heaven. They are generally listed by most Bible scholars as follows: (1) to Mary of Magdala (Jo. 20: 11-17; Mk. 16: 9); (2) to the other women (Matt. 28: 9, 10); (3) to Simon Peter alone (Lu. 24: 34; I Cor. 15: 5); (4) to the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lu. 24: 13-35; Mk. 16: 12, 13); (5) to the ten apostles in the Upper Room, Thomas being absent (Lu. 24: 36-49; Jo. 20: 19-23; Mk. 16: 14)—all of these appearances occurring on the day of Christ's resurrection; (6) to the eleven apostles one week later (Jo. 20: 26-29). As to the time of the following three appearances, it cannot be definitely determined; (7) to the seven apostles at the Lake of Galilee (Jo. 21: 1-24); (8) to five hundred on a hill in Galilee (Matt.

28: 16-20; Mk. 16: 15-18; I Cor. 15: 6); (9) to James, the Lord's brother (I Cor. 15: 7); (10) Christ's final appearance was on the day of his Ascension (Lu. 24: 50, 51; Ac. 1: 6-9).

Relative to Christ's appearance to his disciples on the evening of his resurrection, Professor Henry Barclay Swete has a splendid discussion in his excellent book on the subject of Christ's appearances. Note the following striking quotation concerning his appearance in the Upper Room:

"When the Lord vanished out of the sight of the two disciples at Emmaus, as soon as the first surprise was over, they girded themselves for another journey, and retraced their steps to Jerusalem. Whatever the business may have been that called them to Emmaus, it was of no account in comparison with the duty of reporting their great experience to the Eleven without delay. As Mary of Magdala had hastened from the empty tomb to the lodging of Peter and John, so the two now made their way to the room where at this hour the whole company would be assembled for the evening meal. They reached the place big with tidings which they believed themselves the first to bring. But they had been forestalled. When the door was unbarred they were greeted at once with the cry, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. Yet the joy, the amazement of the Eleven and their party must have grown sensibly as the two told their story, with the fulness of the Eastern love of detail—how the Stranger overtook them on the road, what He said, how He 'opened the Scriptures,' how in the end He was revealed to them, and then at once disappeared.

"It was now evening and save for the moonlight dark; the sun had been low in the heavens when they reached Emmaus, nearly two hours ago. The door of the chamber had been barred again

after the admission of the two brethren, to make sure against a sudden attack by the emissaries of the Sanhedrin; for the disciples were still haunted by the fear of attack. Suddenly, while the two were yet describing what had passed between themselves and the risen Christ, they became conscious of a Presence in their midst: a form was seen standing before them; a voice greeted them with the customary, 'Peace be unto you.'"

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe what took place in the Upper Room that evening when Christ appeared to the disciples.

II. OUR LORD'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS DISCIPLES

(Lu. 24: 44-49)

While I was yet with you, verse 44a. This expression of the Master plainly shows that the period of his sojourn on earth with men; that is, in the human sense, was now in the past. His abode would soon be in heaven with God. In verses 44 and 45, Jesus doubtless had reference to what he had said to his disciples on that first Easter evening in the Upper Room.

Then opened he their understanding, verse 45a. St. John, in chapter 20 and verse 22, gives the way in which Jesus opened their understanding: "He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This power of the Holy Spirit was the great instrument which led them in securing the success that they had as Christ's commissioned ministers of his Gospel. May we believe that Jesus, on the day of his Resurrection, and at other times during the forty days following his Resurrection, reminded his disciples of the Old Testament scriptures regarding himself. May we believe also he was careful to unfold to them the deep meanings of these holy passages in reference to himself. Thus, we feel certain, Jesus purposed in his

heart to interpret to them some of the striking messianic passages of the Old Testament relative to his coming, his death and his Resurrection, all of which had already been fulfilled. Hence, they could go forth to proclaim the Christ as the blessed Messiah who had fulfilled these prophecies concerning the Son of God.

According to *The Pulpit Commentary*, the thought briefly summarized by St. Luke in verses 46 through 49, concerning Christ's great sayings, are expressed in these words: "Some probably spoken in the course of the walk to Emmaus, some on that first Easter evening, some on other occasions during the forty days which elapsed between the Resurrection and the Ascension."

Note again, Jesus said unto them, **Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day**, verse 46. The student is to remember in this connection the the Twenty-Second Psalm and also the Fifty-Third chapter of Isaiah are noteworthy passages which show that the coming Messiah would endure great suffering for the sins of the people. His death and resurrection had been clearly set forth by the old prophets in the Old Testament scriptures. In reference to his rising from the dead on the third day, note these parallels in Holy Writ: Jonah was delivered from the whale on the third day; the baker in prison with Joseph was freed on the third day; life first appeared on the earth on the third day of Creation. The prophet Hosea, in reference to Israel, said with reference to God's will toward those people, "On the third day he will raise us up" (Ch. 6: 2). Observe, too, that no part of the sacrifice was to remain in the camp of Israel farther than the third day. "It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow: and if aught remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in the fire. And if it be eaten

at all on the third day, it is abominable; it shall not be accepted" (Lev. 19: 6, 7). This was to prevent corruption or decay. "So our Lord, rising on the third day, saw no corruption."

Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, verse 47. Matthew 28: 19 and Mark 16: 15 give more definitely the command of Jesus concerning his Great Commission. In reference to the "beginning at Jerusalem," Psalm 110: 2 contains the prophecy which states that from Zion first should proceed the great proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

Ye are witnesses of these things. Christ's disciples had been with him from the beginning, and had witnessed his wonderful works which he had done in Samaria, Galilee, Judea, and in Jerusalem. Now they were also to bear witness of him in carrying out the Great Commission. Note Christ's words to them in Acts 1: 8: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." "Their task was to say, 'we knew him living, we mourned him dead, we saw him risen.'"—Alexander Maclaren.

Behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you. The promise of the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father, which is referred to in Isa. 44: 3. This promise was to assure his disciples that they would be endued with power by the Holy Spirit to go forth in the strength of the Lord to do his work in the midst of a sinful world. The Holy Spirit truly descended on the day of Pentecost upon the whole Christian Church. God's Holy Spirit is upon the Church of Christ today to guide and to lead God's children in the way of righteousness, and to direct them in holy service unto the Lord. There must be

power for witnessing for Christ, or else one's testimony would be as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal in the ears of sinful men. Note the tremendous task given to these twelve apostles: go and preach the Gospel to a world of wicked people steeped in paganism, superstition, sensuality, selfishness, greed, cruelty, etc. Such power as the Holy Spirit could give them was needed for such a task. This same power is needed today to direct every servant as he goes forth to proclaim the Gospel of righteousness. Divine power must be felt and manifested in the lives of soul-winners for Christ before the world today will heed their teachings of the Gospel.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What were Christ's final instructions to his disciples before his Ascension? What were they to preach to all people? What was this promise which he said he would send upon them? Why is the presence of the Holy Spirit necessary for one laboring in God's kingdom work before he can accomplish the most possible good?

III. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS TO HEAVEN

Lu. 24: 50-53)

I The Place:

And he led them out as far as Bethany. It is thought that Jesus led his disciples, and those chosen to witness the last earthly scene of their Lord's ministry, from the Upper Room in Jerusalem, past the scene of the agony, and the scene of the weeping on to some quiet spot not far from Bethany. The expression quoted here indicates that Christ desired to give to his disciples further evidence of his deity, the blessed privilege of companionship with him to the very last. Now, relative to the scene, the Ascension took place, it is believed on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. In this connection, Dean Stanley wrote, "On the wild up-

lands which immediately overhang the village, he finally withdrew from the eyes of his disciples."

2. The Act of Ascension:

He lifted up his hands and blessed them. In the Acts of the apostles, chapter I, verse 4, we read: "Being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the presence of the Father." When he had finished speaking, he lifted up his hands and blessed them—gave them his parting words with his Divine benediction. Then he parted from them; that is, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

For further description of his Ascension, Acts 1: 9, states it thus: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." "As they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."—*The Pulpit Commentary*. Thus, he was parted from his disciples and carried up into heaven, which solemnly suggested to them that he was "no more with them" (verse 44).

3. The Consequent Conduct of the Disciples:

And they worshipped him. Although the visible presence of Jesus was gone, they worshipped him. They firmly believed on him, they remembered his commission to them, and they returned to Jerusalem to tarry for the coming of the Holy Spirit. These disciples had a continuing faith in their ascended Lord. They went, we are told, regularly to the Temple, they worshipped and they waited—"praising and blessing God."

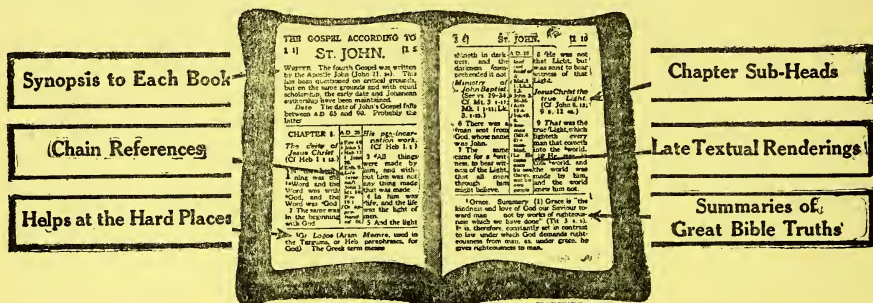
CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the place where Christ ascended to heaven. What took place before Christ ascended? What was the consequent conduct of the disciples after Jesus separated from them in the cloud?

Helps On the Pages Where Needed

The Scofield Reference Bible

Edited by REV. C. I. SCOFIELD, D.D.

Compare your Bibles with it. See if any of them have these helpful features: Chain-references of great Bible doctrines—Summaries of great Bible truths—Synopsis to each book of the Bible—Prophecies harmonized—Apparent contradictions reconciled—Revised marginal references—Bible types explained—The greater covenants analyzed.



HANDY SIZE EDITION

Specimen of Type

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

Size 7x4½ inches and only 1½ inches in thickness.

LARGE TYPE EDITION

Specimen of Type

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

Size 8½x5½ inches and only 1½ inches in thickness.

NOTE—All have overlapping covers, round corners, and red under gold edges, except as noted.

No. 40. Fine Grain Cloth, round corners, red edges. **\$1.95**

No. 53. French Morocco Leather **\$5.50**

"Oxford India Paper" Edition

Fits the Pocket

Size 7x4½ inches and only 1 inch thick.

No. 53x. French Morocco Leather **\$7.00**

No. 55x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$8.00**

No. 59x. Persian Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$9.00**

With Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names, Subject, Index, Concordance and Maps. (1½ inches thick.)

No. 153. French Morocco Leather, (white paper edition, 1½ inches thick) **\$6.50**

No. 155x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$9.50**

No. 165x. Real Morocco Leather, calf lined to edge, silk sewed **\$12.00**

No. 90. Fine Grain Cloth, round corners, red edges. **\$2.75**

No. 73. French Morocco Leather **\$6.50**

"Oxford India Paper" Edition

Size 8½x5½ inches and only 1 inch thick.

No. 73x. French Morocco Leather **\$9.00**

No. 75x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$10.00**

No. 79x. Persian Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$11.50**

With Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names, Subject, Index, Concordance and Maps. (1½ inches thick.)

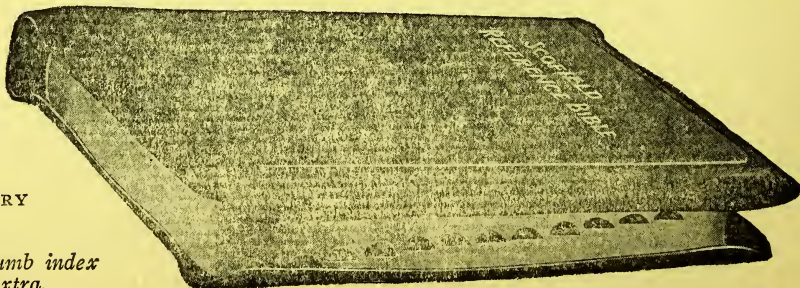
No. 173. French Morocco Leather, (white paper edition, 1½ inches thick) **\$7.50**

No. 175x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed **\$11.50**

No. 185x. Real Morocco Leather, calf lined to edge, silk sewed **\$14.75**

A
BIBLE
AND A
COMMENTARY
COMBINED

Improved thumb index
at 50c extra.



Cp 286.2

The Advanced Quarterly

For Use By

ADULT

and

YOUNG

PEOPLE'S

Classes



PUBLISHED BY
Free Will Baptist Press
AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

THE ADVANCED QUARTERLY

for

Young People and Adults

REV. R. B. SPENCER ----- *Editor-Writer*

Volume II

Second Quarter, 1941

Number 2

April-May-June

C O N T E N T S

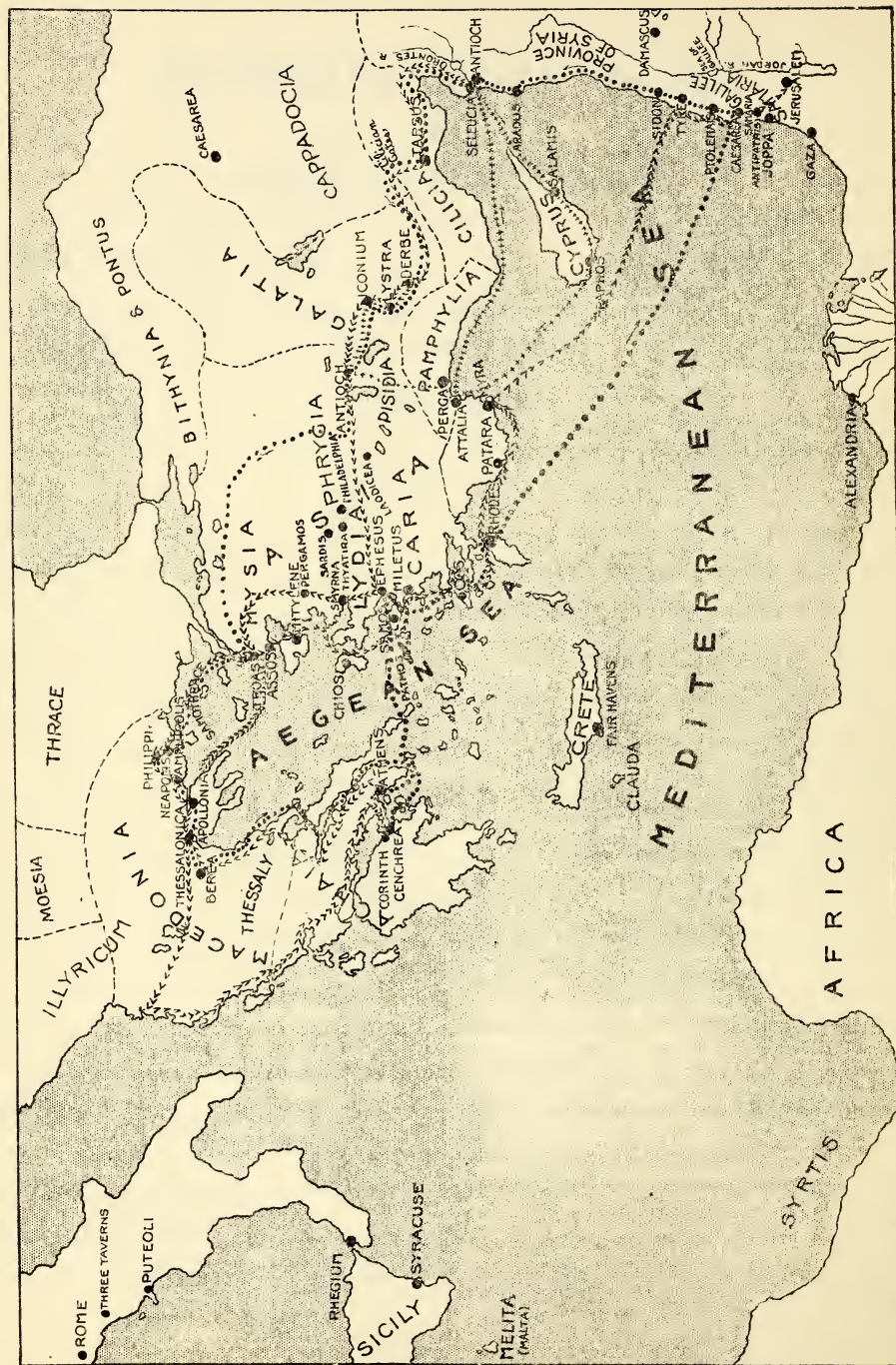
	Page
1. April 6: Christ Promises Power -----	3
2. April 13: Christ Shows Himself Alive -----	7
3. April 20: Using Witnessing Power -----	11
4. April 27: The Early Church Meeting Human Needs -----	16
5. May 4: The Church Enlarging Its Fellowship -----	21
6. May 11: The Responsibility of the Home Regarding Beverage Alcohol -----	26
7. May 18: Broadening Christian Horizons: Saul's Conversion -----	30
8. May 25: Broadening Christian Horizons: Peter's Vision -----	35
9. June 1: Broadening Christian Horizons: The Antioch Movement -----	39
10. June 8: Beginning of World Missions -----	44
11. June 15: Progress in World Missions -----	49
12. June 22: First Jerusalem Conference on World Missions -----	54
13. June 29: Lessons from the Early Church -----	58

Published Quarterly by the Free Will Baptist Press, Ayden, North Carolina.

PRICE 8c PER COPY

32c PER YEAR

Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office, Ayden, North Carolina,
under the Act of March 3, 1879.



Lesson One for Sunday, April 6, 1941

Christ Promises Power

(Lu. 24; Ac. 1)

Golden Text: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts. 1: 8.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(*Authorized Version*)

Acts 1:

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: As far as we are able to ascertain, Christ ascended to heaven on Thursday, May 18, A. D. 30. Ten days later, May 28, Pentecost occurred.

Place: The city of Jerusalem, and the Upper Room which was located somewhere in the city.

Persons: The Lord's disciples.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To show the significance of the angel's message to the apostles.
- (2). To set forth the activities of the disciples during the ten days' waiting period before the coming of the Holy Spirit.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 28: 3; Mk. 16: 5; Lu. 24: 4.
T.—Jo. 20: 12; 14: 3; I Thess. 1: 10;
4: 16.

W.—Ac. 9: 37; Matt. 10: 2-4; Lu. 6: 15.

T.—Matt. 13: 55; Lu. 23: 49, 55; 24: 10.

F.—13: 18; Ac. 12: 25; Lu. 6: 16.

S.—Ac. 15: 22; I Sam. 16: 7.

S.—Jer. 11: 20; Rev. 2: 23.

THE INTRODUCTION

In the study of this lesson, may we call attention just here that, since Christ's final words before his ascension were treated in Topic Two of the last lesson in the First Quarter, covering verses 44-49 in Luke 24, we are not discussing here these verses, although they are given in this lesson text. On the other hand, this lesson discussion is confined to (1) the angel's message to the disciples, and (2) to the ten days of waiting before Pentecost came. Both of these contain valuable thought for study.

I. THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE TO THE DISCIPLES (Acts 1: 10, 11)

Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? The two angels, who had appeared unto the disciples, asked this question of them who were still looking up into the sky after Christ had ascended out of their sight into heaven. They were observing that these disciples were still looking up steadfast to heaven for some purpose. Perhaps they were wishing for Jesus to come back to them in a few moments. Possibly they expected to see some strange change in the visible heavens just at that time as Christ had ascended out of their sight. Or, perhaps, they were expecting to see something of the glory of the heavens as they would open to receive their ascending Lord. Remember, Christ had told them before that they would see the heaven opened (John 1: 51).

Note, these angels appeared as two men in white apparel. They were bright and glittering, and had been sent to bear a suitable message to the Lord's disciples. They had been sent from heaven to bear this vital message. The ascended Lord had placed upon them great honor in making them his ambassadors to his beloved followers. These

heavenly messengers were to confirm the disciples' faith concerning the Lord's Second coming. They said, This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven, verse 11b. Therefore, he, whom you are looking thus long after, is not gone from you forever, for there is a day appointed in which he shall return. He will return in like manner, literally and visibly; "not in a figure or in any spiritual or metaphorical sense, but in living fleshly reality shall he return to this earth" (S. H. Kellogg). He will come in glory to judge the quick and the dead. He went away in a cloud, and he will return in clouds with angels attending him; for it is written, "Behold, he cometh with clouds! And every eye shall see him!" The scriptures are plain on this point. "He is gone up with a shout, and with the sound of a trumpet (Ps. 47: 5), and he will descend from heaven with a shout and with the trump of God (I Thess. 4: 16)"—Matthew Henry.

"And it is natural that for a time they should continue to gaze in the direction in which Christ had disappeared. Stood by them—Not up in the sky as one might at first think, but close by the apostles, where they could talk to them."—Arnold's Practical Commentary.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What reasons may be advanced why the disciples stood gazing up to heaven? For what purpose were the angels sent to these apostles? How did Christ ascend to heaven and how will he return to earth?

II THE TEN DAYS WAITING BEFORE PENTECOST (Acts 1: 12-26)

Returned they unto Jerusalem. Christ had told his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, they returned from Mount Olivet, a sabbath day's journey, that is,

about two thousand cubits, or less than one mile.

1. The Church of the Upper Room:

Upon returning from Olivet to Jerusalem, what place was more appropriate for these apostles to go than to the sacred Upper Room? It was indeed a place of sacred memories to Christ's followers. Remember, it was there that Christ had observed with them the last Passover. It was there that Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper, and had washed the disciples' feet. There he had pointed out the one who betrayed him, and there he foretold Peter's denial. It was there, many Bible scholars believe, that he had delivered his farewell discourses, and had prayed the great intercessory prayer, as recorded in John 17, to God.

Yes, it was there that, **When they had come in, they went up into an upper room.** There, in that sacred room, they poured out their souls in prayer to the heavenly Father. From time to time, during the ten days' waiting period, the Lord's disciples worshiped in deep earnestness, pouring out their souls in supplication to Almighty God. In the fullness of time, the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit came upon them. Thus they became endued with power from on high. The Comforter had come to guide them, and to abide with them forever.

Note in verse 13 the names of some of those who were present in the Upper Room: Peter and James, John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. And also Mary the mother of Jesus with the women, and with the brethren, were worshipers together with the apostles. **With one accord in prayer and supplication**, they worshiped the true and living God. These followers of Jesus were zealous in offering prayer

to the heavenly Father. They were moved, by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them, to enter into most sacred worship, and to pour out their supplications to the holy One in heaven. It was a great period of praise to Almighty God. Thus, the character of the meeting in the Upper Room was most sacred and entered into by these beloved followers of Christ in a deep spiritual way.

May we consider some plausible reasons why, in the minds of the disciples, a definite ascension was suitable under the circumstance: (1) it served to impress more deeply upon their minds Christ's supernatural character. (2) It removed the immediate expectation of other appearances, as made known by the angel's message to the apostles. (3) It paved the way for further revelation concerning the Second coming of Christ.

2. The Calling of Matthias:

Although the calling of Matthias occurred after Jesus had ascended to heaven, it is probable that our Lord gave some directions about it a short while before his ascension. Remember, the disciples, according to verse 15, numbered at that time about one hundred and twenty. Dr. Lightfoot reckons, in this connection, that the eleven apostles, the seventy disciples, and about thirty-nine more, all of Christ's own kindred, country, and concourse, made up this one hundred and twenty, as referred to in this verse. Whether these were all or not, they represented the beginning of the Christian Church. They were the grain of mustard seed that grew in a tree. They were the leaven that leavened the whole lump.

It is well to note that the apostle Peter was the speaker here. He had been and still was the most forward one of the Lord's apostles. **He stood up** in the midst of the disciples, and made the proposal for the choice of another apostle to fill the vacancy which was made by the death of Judas Iscariot. He made

reference in his speech to the Scriptures (Ps. 41: 9) concerning Judas who had been the guide to the chief priests and captains who took Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. He said that Judas was one who was numbered with the other eleven disciples, and had had a part in the Gospel ministry. Study verses 18 through 20 for the apostle Peter's further remarks concerning the end of Judas.

Moreover, the apostle Peter pointed out in his speech that, according to the Scriptures (Ps. 109: 8), another should be chosen to take his place, and to be ordained to be a witness with us. There were two, who were known to have been Christ's constant attendants, nominated for this place. They; that is, the one hundred and twenty, not the eleven apostles, appointed two; namely, Joseph and Barsabas (who was surnamed Justus and Matthias). Both Joseph and Matthias were worthy men, and so well qualified that the disciples could not tell which one was the more fit for the office. Observe how the body of disciples proceeded to elect one of these men. They turned to God in prayer for divine direction. Note the prayer: **Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether (which one) of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship,** verses 24, 25a. This assembled body of disciples sought divine guidance before making the choice between the two men. They knew that God understands the hearts of all men, and therefore they desired to have his divine approval in the selection of the one to fill the vacancy. Lord, show us this and we will be satisfied. It is right that God should choose his own servants. Observe, too, that these disciples were perfectly ready to receive him whom God would choose as a brother minister with them.

Note the method of selection of the man. They gave forth lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, verse 26a. Relative to the casting of lots in that day, Dr. William Smith in his dictionary entitled **A DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE** has given the following explanation of casting lots:

"LOT (literally a pebble). The custom of deciding doubtful questions by lot is one of great extent and high antiquity. Among the Jews lots were used with the expectation that God would so control them as to give a right direction to them. They were very often used by God's appointment. 'As to the mode of casting lots, we have no certain information. Probably several modes were practiced.' 'Very commonly among the Latins little counters of wood were put into a jar with so narrow a neck that only one could come out at a time. After the jar had been filled with water and the counters shaken, the lots were determined by the order in which the bits of wood, representing the several parties, came out with the water. In other cases they were put into a wide open jar, and the counters were drawn out by the hand. Sometimes again they were cast in the manner of dice. The soldiers who cast lots for Christ's garments used these dice.'"—**Lyman Abbott.**

CLASS DISCUSSION: Where did the disciples go when they left the Ascension scene? Discuss what took place in the Church of the Upper Room during the ten days' waiting period. Who were some of the one hundred and twenty disciples mentioned in this study? Describe the calling of Matthias as one of the apostles to fill the place made vacant by the death of Judas.

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Pentecost.—Acts 2: 1-12; Lev. 23: 15; Deut. 16: 9; Ac. 4: 31; Mk. 16: 17; I Cor. 12: 10; 13: 1.

Lesson Two for Sunday, April 13, 1941

Christ Shows Himself Alive (Easter Lesson)

(Luke 24)

Golden Text: I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. Rev. 1: 18.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Luke 24:

13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-score furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: Sunday, April 9 A. D. 30.

Place: Jerusalem, Emmaus, and the intervening territory.

Persons: The risen Christ and his disciples.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To teach that the presence of Christ can dispel doubt, and bring peace and joy to human hearts.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mk. 16: 12; Matt. 18: 20.

T.—Jo. 20: 14; 21: 4.

W.—Ac. 17: 3; I Pet. 1: 11.

T.—Gen. 3: 15; Nu. 21: 9; Deut. 18: 15.

F.—Isa. 7: 14; 53: 1-12.

S.—Dan. 9: 24; Mal. 3: 1.

S.—Matt. 14: 19.

THE INTRODUCTION

This Easter lesson contains one of the most beautiful stories found in the New Testament. It has as its setting the

scene on the road Emmaus and in the places of assembly of the disciples in Jerusalem. In the first place, it occurred between two disciples and the risen Lord on the same day of his resurrection; and in the second, it was the scene of the eleven and others who were gathered together, conversing about the risen Christ that evening with the two disciples joining them. The appearance of the risen Lord to the women, to Peter, to the two disciples on the Emmaus road, and to the group that Sunday night—all were striking evidences that Jesus had come from the tomb to live for evermore.

I. A REMARKABLE CONVERSATION (Lu. 24: 13-17; 25-27)

It was Sunday, the same day that Christ rose from the tomb, when two obscure disciples (not apostles), Cleopas or Alpheus and another, were on their way from Jerusalem to the little village of Emmaus which was about seven miles away. Who the other disciple was is not known. These two men were walking and talking together of all these things which had happened, verse 14. They were sad and perplexed over the betrayal, trial and tragic crucifixion of their Lord on the cross. They were going over in their conversation the whole account, let us imagine, and communing together over the whole event with hearts full of grief. And how perplexed they were at the news which had come to them that day about their Master's resurrection. They had not seen him. They had had no proof themselves of his having come from the tomb, therefore, to them it seemed only as an idle tale. But the scripture tells us that, as they talked over these things which had happened, they reasoned with themselves concerning the probability of their Lord's resurrection. To them it was mysterious and unbelievable. Others, likewise, doubted that their Lord had risen from the tomb, and had gone forth, showing

himself to his disciples. How could Christ burst the tomb and come forth alive? It was a great question, and thus they reasoned in their hearts about these things.

Note, while they were communing together and reasoning about these things, Jesus drew near, as a stranger, and went with them. But their eyes, for the time being, were holden from recognizing him. Dr. Moffit says, "They were prevented from recognizing Him." They did not at all think that he was their risen Lord. In St. Mark's Gospel it is stated that he appeared in another form unto two of them (Mk. 16: 12). Moreover, he spoke as a stranger, as one not knowing the things that had recently taken place concerning Jesus. But his method of approach, and manner of questioning them was a fine way to get them to express themselves concerning the whole matter. Sometimes men are brought fact to fact with perplexing problems, and they must take a stand one way or the other. Furthermore, it was an opportune time to come to their aid, and reveal to them the deep truth of his supernatural power. Matthew Henry says, "They communed together, and reasoned, and perhaps were warm at the argument, one hoping that their Master was risen, and would set up his kingdom, the other despairing." When two or more come together to commune concerning strange and difficult things about Christ and the Kingdom, he draws near in the Spirit to comfort and to direct them in the right way. So, here is a case in which the risen Lord appears to dispel doubt, fear and anxiety concerning himself as the risen Christ. Yes, Christ will manifest his love and power to those who seek him in the light of Divine truth.

In the next place, note how tactfully Jesus drew from them their story, and how he then directed them to the Scriptures concerning these things that should

come to pass. "He expounds to them the real meaning of prophetic passages with which they are familiar, but which they do not understand."—**Arnold's Practical Commentary.** And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself, verse 27. He showed to these two disciples, from the sacred truth of the scriptures of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, how they were fulfilled in the risen Christ, the Son of God. Note particularly, he began with Moses, the first inspired writer of the Old Testament, and went on through all the prophets, pointing out to them the scripture references concerning the Messiah, and expounding to them the things concerning himself. Thus he showed how the inspired writers' predictions had come true about what should take place concerning the Lord Jesus. Accordingly, he made known to them in a most definite way how the Scriptures, concerning Christ's trial, crucifixion, death and resurrection, were fulfilled concerning these things which are come to pass.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask a member of the class to discuss the things which had happened, which the two disciples were talking about as they walked toward Emmaus. How did Jesus approach them, and what did he tell them?

II. A JOYOUS REVELATION TO THE TWO DISCIPLES (Lu. 24: 28-32)

They drew nigh unto the village whither they went, verse 28a. When the two disciples turned in to stop at Emmaus, they invited the stranger to abide with them, and he went to tarry with them. Remember, all who would desire Christ to dwell with them must invite him. If they desire his good counsel, they must open their hearts to receive it. Note here, they constrained him. We are to show our great desire

to have Jesus abide with us while we are on life's way. It is great joy to consecrated Christians to have more of the good counsel and companionship of the Master as he is passing their way. His abiding love and companionship will more completely keep the joy-bells ringing in human hearts than any thing else.

Now comes the thrill, the climax of the story. It was evening; the day had closed; and the time had come for the evening meal. As they went into the village, and as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it. Note, he offered thanks to Almighty God. How familiar these words sound to us when we remember how Jesus was so accustomed to give thanks when he and his disciples would dine together! Note again how the great revelation of the Master, as the risen Lord, was made known to them. What a joyous revelation! What a feeling came over them! And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, verse 31a. Thus, the purpose had been accomplished; the mystery had been revealed; and, in a moment's time as they dined, the story had been made complete, and Jesus vanished out of their sight.

May we not sense something of the feeling of Cleopas and his companion disciple? May we not realize how joyous they felt when their risen Lord was plainly revealed to them? We certainly can if we will open our hearts to God. It may be on some walk or lone journey that we sense in a strange way the presence of Christ's comforting Spirit. It may be that, when we are in the depths of despair, in great distress, or in deep sorrow and want, he appears plainly into our presence to give consolation with his great Spirit. Or it may be when we are most busy with our business and the cares of life that Jesus appears to our hearts; or when we take opportunity to meditate upon the goodness of God, he is made more

real to our souls. Yes, the familiar expression, "He who is much in the presence of Jesus will know something about a burning heart," is true, and bears with it a sense of joy. When Jesus had vanished out of their sight, they said, **Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures,** verse 32. There is no wonder that their hearts were moved with such strange things revealed to them that afternoon. Indeed, he will talk with us in that still small voice today, and open unto us the mysteries of the Scriptures if we will gladly open our hearts and minds, and listen to his voice.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did they constrain this stranger to abide with them? Describe what took place while they were dining. What is meant by this expression: **Their eyes were opened, and they knew him?** How may we sense the presence of Jesus to day in our own lives?

III. A SHARING OF GOOD NEWS OF THE RISEN LORD (Lu. 24: 33-35)

They rose up the same hour, verse 33a. These two disciples did not delay, but hurried quickly toward Jerusalem to tell the other disciples what they had witnessed that afternoon. They had good news to relate to them, therefore, they could not wait until the next day, but must go at once to make known the good news of their having seen the risen Lord. Surely the eleven must know at once this good news. Anyone whose heart is burning with zeal as a result of most recent contact with the blessed Son of God will be ready to share his joy with others what he knows of the Lord. No, these disciples could not wait a single hour. They had to cover quickly the seven miles to Jerusalem, and tell others what they had witnessed that Sunday afternoon. Mat-

thew Henry says, "They rose up the same hour, so transported with joy at the discovery Christ had made of himself to them that they could not stay to make an end of their supper, but returned with all speed to Jerusalem." Remember, it is the duty of those to whom Jesus has manifested himself both to tell others what he has done for them and to live exemplary lives before the world. We are exhorted by the holy Word of God to instruct, comfort and strengthen the brethren when we have been converted. Christianity is to be taken to others.

When they came to the place of assembly, they found the eleven gathered together and others that were with them. Note how Cleopas and the other disciple found them! They were talking about the same subject. Moreover, they immediately related to these two disciples another proof of Christ's resurrection, for said they, **The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon,** verse 34. The apostle Paul relates in First Corinthians 15: 5 that "He was seen of Cephus, and then of the twelve." Note also in this connection that in St. Mark's Gospel the angel ordered the women to tell Peter in particular of the Lord's resurrection, probably for his comfort, and since he had been the most forward member of the disciples. Let us observe just here that Christ was seen five times the same day that he arose: (1) by Mary Magdalene alone in the garden (John 20: 14); (2) by the women as they went to tell the disciples (Matthew 28: 9); (3) by Peter alone; (4) by the two disciples going to Emmaus; and (5) that Sunday night by the eleven and others assembled together.

The lesson text closes with these words: **They (the two disciples) told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread,** verse 35. Cleopas and his fellow disciple related to them how he had

spoken to them on the road to Emmaus; how he had opened to them the Scriptures, beginning with Moses and on through the prophets in the Old Testament, concerning the Messiah; and how he made their hearts burn within them as he revealed to them the mysteries of the word of God. Then they related how this stranger was suddenly made known to them in the breaking of bread; how God had opened their eyes and they beheld their risen Lord dining with them.

The following paragraph is pointed and suitable for a concluding thought of this lesson:

"What a day it had been! What did the fact of a living Christ mean to those disciples? It meant EVERYTHING that made life for them worth while. It meant joy instead of gloom, courage instead of faintheartedness, victory in-

stead of defeat, a life of service instead of an earthly routine and a confident assurance of heaven at last."—Arnold's Practical Commentary.

CLASS DISCUSSION: When the Christ made himself known to the two disciples, what did they do? Describe what took place when the two disciples came to the place where the eleven and others were assembled. To whom and how many times did the resurrected Lord appear on the day that he arose? How should the story of this lesson appeal to us today, and what should be our attitude toward the risen Christ?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Risen Lord with His Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.—John 21; 1-19; Ac. 10: 40, 41; 20: 28, 29; Heb. 13: 20, 21; I Pet. 2: 25; Jon. 13: 36; Ac. 12: 3, 4.

Lesson Three for Sunday, April 20, 1941

Using Witnessing Power

(Acts 2: 1—to 4: 31)

Golden Text: They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Ac. 4: 31b.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Acts 2:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 4:

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy

Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13 Now when they saw the boldness

of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to

all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name,

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: It is generally agreed that Pentecost was on Sunday, May 28, A. D. 30, seven weeks after the Resurrection Sunday. The exact time of the speech of the apostle Peter before the Sanhedrin is not known.

Place: The City of Jerusalem.

Persons: The disciples, the cripple at the Beautiful gate, the Sanhedrin Council and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To set forth the power as manifested in the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples.

(2). To teach the boldness of Peter and John to proclaim the Word of God in spite of bitter opposition of the Jewish rulers.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 1: 14; Lev. 23: 15; De. 16: 9.

T.—Mk. 16: 17. I Cor. 12: 10; 13: 1.

W.—Lu. 12: 11, 12; Ac. 2: 24; 3: 6, 16.

T.—Ps. 118: 22; Isa. 28: 16; Matt. 21: 42.

F.—I Tim. 2: 5, 6; Matt. 11: 25; I Cor. 1: 27.

S.—Ac. 3: 9, 10; Jon. 11: 47.

S.—Ac. 1: 8; 22: 15; I Jon. 1: 1, 3.

THE INTRODUCTION

Our lesson deals with the day of Pentecost which was the most important day in the history of the Christian church. The manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit on that day was great, enduing the disciples with spiritual power to witness for God. It is generally regarded by most religious people as the day which the Christian church was born.

The apostle Peter's message to the people in the Temple, sometime after the day of Pentecost, was convincing of the power of Christ, and many souls were convicted of their sins, and were converted under his masterful preaching. The boldness with which Peter and John witnessed for Christ before the Sanhedrin Council, upon the occasion of their trial, was a striking testimony of the power of the Holy Spirit upon them.

I. THE DAY OF PENTECOST

(Ac. 2: 1-4)

1. The Coming of the Holy Spirit:

It was an important day, coming just fifty days from the Resurrection Sunday, and ten days after Christ's Ascension. It was at the time of a solemn feast, "The Feast of Harvest," when the Holy Spirit came. From all parts of

the country a great concourse of people had come to Jerusalem to observe or celebrate this annual feast. Remember, this feast had been kept for centuries by the Jews in remembrance of the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai to Moses. Matthew Henry says, "Fittingly, therefore, is the Holy Ghost given at that feast, in fire and in tongues, for the promulgation of the evangelical law, not as that to one nation, but to every creature." This feast of Pentecost came on the first day of the week, Sunday—the day which God had made to be a memorial of the resurrection of Christ and the pouring out of his Holy Spirit.

Note again, the Holy Spirit came when **They were all with one accord in one place**, verse 1b. The Lord's disciples were all with one accord, having no strife, no dissension or division among them, but all were agreeable and assembled in one place. We are not told in particular as to what place these disciples were gathered together on this occasion. It might have been in the Temple, where they went for public worship at times (Luke 24: 53), or it might have been in their own Upper Room, where they often met for sacred worship to the Lord. What a fine spiritual blessing it would be if all Christians today would live and serve the Lord **with one accord**! Think how the world would take note, and how it would greatly profit thereby! May we observe that these disciples had been praying much, and were waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them. St. Luke says in Acts 1: 14: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." In like manner, people should pray more today **with one accord**. Let us be assured that we would then have the Holy Spirit poured out upon us from on high.

2. The Effect of this Manifestation:

A sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. This sound was super-

natural in origin which produced awe, wonder and expectancy in those who were present in the house. Those assembled disciples were startled upon witnessing this sudden coming of this sound from heaven. It came like the voice of one crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." It came as a sound of wind, and, note, the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind (John 3: 8), for "thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." All the house was filled where they were assembled for religious worship.

Note the visible sign: **they saw cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them**, verse 3. This visible manifestation signified the Holy Spirit, and that He rested upon each of them. By **cloven tongues**, the Revised Version renders it, "Tongues parting asunder." Arnold's Practical Commentary has it stated thus: "Apparently supernatural fire appeared, first as one mass, but afterward dividing, one tongue settling on each head." Dr. Hammond has described it in these words: "There was an appearance of something like flaming fire lighting on every one of them, which divided asunder, and so formed the resemblance of tongues, with that part of them that was next their heads divided or cloven." Such a sign was to strengthen the faith of the disciples, and to convince others of the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Let us meditate upon this thought for a moment: "The Spirit, like fire, melts the heart, separates and burns up the dross, and kindles pious and devout affections in the soul, in which as in the fire upon the altar, the spiritual sacrifices are offered up. This is the fire which Christ came to send upon the earth" (Luke 12: 49).—Matthew Henry's Commentary.

And they were filled with the **Holy Ghost**. This was a more powerful filling than any that they had hitherto witnessed of the Holy Spirit coming upon them.

More than ever were they now possessed with his sanctifying power to better qualify them for the task which Christ had given them in his Great Commission on the day of his Ascension. They were endued now with miraculous power for the preaching of the Gospel and for the healing of diseases, and for their boldness to withstand opposition and endure hardships for the cause of righteousness.

They began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Such was a sign that God was directing the movement, and had a purpose in manifesting his power in this way. He works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform that sinful men might be drawn to Christ. They spoke in other tongues; that is, besides their native language. What they spoke was not a concern of common conversation, but the word of God, as the Spirit gave them utterance. They were able to speak different languages as they had occasion to use them. Men present of different languages said, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Ac. 2: 11). This manifestation of Divine power was a means of convincing many from foreign countries (who had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the "Feast of Harvests") that God was the author of the strange movement. It helped also to spread the Gospel among them in a more impressive way. "They spoke not from any previous thought or meditation, but as the Spirit gave them utterance; he furnished them with the matter as well as the language."—Matthew Henry. It is obvious that many people, both foreign and native, recognized such as a miraculous power given to these disciples by the heavenly Father, and that his Spirit gave these disciples the power to speak to them in their own languages. Since the visitors had come from different countries, it is granted that they spoke different languages, and for them to understand what these

disciples (who knew no other language but their own) said in their languages was mysterious, and bore heavily upon their minds to persuade them to believe in the power of Christ to send the Holy Spirit upon his followers. Such served to convince many, let us believe, of the Son of God as being the Savior of men.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask a member of the class to describe the coming of the Holy Spirit. What is meant by They were all with one accord in one place? Describe cloven tongues, like as of fire. Explain how the disciples spoke in tongues and what works of God did they speak to these people?

II. THE TRIAL OF PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN (Ac. 4: 8-20)

Sometime following the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter and John healed a lame man at the Beautiful gate of the Temple as they were going up to worship at the ninth hour. (See Ac. 3). As they entered the sacred place, together with the healed man who was shouting praises to God for what had been done for him, the people were greatly moved with wonder and amazement. Then Peter delivered unto them a great sermon, witnessing for Christ, and telling them of their denial of Jesus and how they had put him to death. He told them that it was through faith in Christ that the cripple was made whole. He exhorted them to repent and have faith in Christ as the Savior of men. The result was "Many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of men was about five thousand" (Ac. 4: 4).

1. Peter and John Imprisoned:

But the priests and the captains of the Temple, and the Sadducees were greatly troubled. Moreover, they proceeded to arrest Peter and John, and to cast them

in prison until the next day for trial. Satan has ever exercised his influence against the work of the Lord, and here he used his agents to imprison God's witnesses.

On the next day they brought Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, the Great Council, for trial. Thereupon, the rulers made the formal demand: **By what power, or by what name have ye done this?** Tell the Council how you healed the cripple who had been lame from birth. Tell us by what authority you did this thing. Tell us who commissioned you to preach such doctrine as this, and who gave you power to work such a miracle as this. Note, these rulers were not so much concerned about the doctrine which they preached, as they were to find some excuse to silence them from preaching the Gospel of Christ.

2. Peter's Defense before the Sanhedrin:

Observe now the apostle's reply. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, **Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This is the answer; this is the authority; this is the power that enabled this man to stand here before you whole. Through Christ, and through him only has this miracle been performed. Thus, boldly and adroitly Peter answered their questions. Remember, the apostle Peter proclaimed Christ as the only name whereby a person may be saved. It was a bold defense which Peter made. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, this apostle could proclaim boldly the power of Jesus to heal people of their diseases, and to save them from their sins. He had no apologies to offer, and no excuses to make; but stood firm upon the solid Rock—the**

Chief Corner Stone—which was set at naught of you builders, and which is become the Head of the corner. He preached to them that salvation which is by Jesus only, and that by no other can a person be saved.

In Peter's forceful message, the following six cardinal principles are expressed or implied in verses 10-12: (1) Jesus is Christ, or the Messiah; (2) he was crucified and was raised from the dead on the third day; (3) he lives for ever more; (4) his power is still found in the world; (5) he was the subject of Old Testament prophecy; and (6) salvation is through him alone.

3. The Decision of the Sanhedrin:

When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, verse 13a. They could not deny the cure of the impotent man. Certainly it was a miracle that had been performed. Moreover, they could say nothing against it, for it was a fact that the man had been healed. Though ignorant and unlearned men, Peter and John had performed in the name of Jesus a miraculous cure on the cripple who was above forty years old, and who had been lame ever since his birth. But when they understood that these apostles had been with Jesus, they then knew what to impute their boldness to, and with whom they had had their education in the deep things of the spiritual life. However reluctant they might have been at first in admitting the fact of the cure of this man, they had to acknowledge that a miracle had been performed. There are some people today who deny the power of Christ, and who will not believe on him unless they could witness the performance of some such miracle.

Now they raise the question among themselves: **What shall we do to these men?** A notable miracle has been performed, and we cannot deny it. They

had just ordered Peter and John to withdraw, to go aside from the council hall that they might discuss among themselves as to what to do with them. Thus, they conferred among themselves over the matter. Remember how the scriptures bear record that the rulers would take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed (Ps. 2: 2). But they finally reached a conclusion; namely, (1) that it was not safe to punish Peter and John for what they had done, knowing that it would be an unrighteous act, and because of the people; (2) that it was very necessary however, to silence them for the future, thus preventing the doctrine of Christ from being spread any further by them. So, they charged Peter and John never to preach this gospel of Christ any more—not to speak at all nor to teach in the name of Jesus, verse 18b. See how these opposers fought against the counsels of heaven! But God would have his witnesses to proclaim the power of Christ to all the world.

4. The Boldness of Peter and John:

Note their reply to the rulers' decision: Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than

to God, judge ye. Whether we are to abide by your request or whether we are to obey God, you may judge for yourselves. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. We cannot refrain from witnessing for Christ and righteousness. We had rather obey God than man. What he had commanded us to do, and what he has revealed unto us through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are moved to perform by his divine grace. We are his witnesses and will boldly proclaim his power and his gospel truths to the people.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the healing of the impotent man. What was the effect of Peter's sermon on the people? Describe the trial of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin. What made them bold? What was the Sanhedrin's decision, and how did Peter and John reply to it?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
The Power of Witnessing and Healing in the Early Church.—Ac. 3: 1-26; Ac. 5: 12; Isa. 35: 6; Matt. 27: 2; Mk. 15: 11; Lu. 23: 18-21; Isa. 50: 6; 53: 5; Lu. 24: 44; I Pet. 1: 10, 11; Deut. 18: 15, 18, 19.

Lesson Four for Sunday, April 27, 1941

The Early Church Meeting Human Needs (Acts 4: 32 to 7: 60)

Golden Text: And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Ac. 4: 32.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

Acts 4:

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and

brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

Acts 6:

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report,

full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch;

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly: and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: A. D. 30, and sometime following.

Place: The city of Jerusalem.

Persons: The apostles and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To show the effect the power of the Holy Spirit had upon the apostles in their labors for the kingdom.

(2). To set forth the teachings of church support as shown by the early church in Jerusalem.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 2: 44; 5: 12; II Cor. 13: 11.

T.—I Pet. 3: 8; Ac. 1: 8, 22; 2: 45.

W.—Ac. 5: 2, 14; 9: 29; Ex. 18: 17.

T.—De. 1: 13; I Tim. 2: 7; 8: 5, 26; 21: 8.

F.—Ac. 8: 17; 13: 3; I Tim. 4: 14.

S.—II Tim. 1: 6. Ac. 12: 24.

S.—Jo. 12: 42; Col. 1: 6.

THE INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we have the model of the pentecostal church showing the spirituality and the fervent love which was manifested by the early Christians. The spirit of loyalty and the boldness with which the apostles went about preaching the word brought forth great results for the kingdom of God. From their labors in Jerusalem

particularly multitudes were won for Christ. The student will find, through a careful study of scripture references that are given in this lesson, interesting truths concerning the trials, the work, and the accomplishments of the early Christian church.

I. UNITY AMONG THE DISCIPLES (Ac. 4: 32-35)

1. Unity of Spirit:

A fine spirit of unity and brotherly love among the disciples is expressed here in these verses of scripture. Behold how beautiful it is for Christians to dwell together in love and peacefulness! The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Note here, the multitude . . . were of one heart and of one soul. Not just

the apostles, but the whole multitude of disciples were in harmony. Remember that there were three thousand who had been converted on the day of Pentecost, and on a later occasion five thousand more who became disciples of Christ. Also there were added to the church daily such as would be saved. The scripture tells us that they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with boldness (verse 31). They rejoiced; they were courageous; and they preached the saving grace of Jesus Christ with all power and conviction. There is no wonder that they were of one heart and of one soul. That is what the holy Spirit does for people. They were led by the Spirit of the Lord. They had one great thing in common—the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Being joined to the Lord, see how beautifully they were joined together in holy love as Christian brethren! Thus they were endued with the power of the Spirit to see alike and to feel alike in the great principles of the Gospel of Christ. Accordingly, with this great power from above, the apostles witnessed boldly of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all” (Verse 33b).

As many as were possessors of lands and houses sold them, verse 34a. Let us observe that the apostolic church had no financial program at first. But all, being of one heart and of one soul, and because of the genuine love which these Christians had one for the other, no one was allowed to suffer for the lack of necessary things. It is true their plan was simple, but praiseworthy. They provided for all by putting what they had into a common treasury. They were like a big family united in a common cause. They were not like Laban of old who said to Jacob, “All that thou seest is mine” (Gen. 31: 43). Nor like Nabal who said to David’s servants, “Shall I then take my bread, and my

water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give unto men?” (I Sam. 25: 11). No, these early Christians were more considerate of the common good of all.

Now note what these disciples of Christ did, **Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own**, verse 32. They brought the prices, the money, for the things which they sold, and **laid them down at the apostles’ feet**. Note this point: they placed the money into a common fund for the apostles to make distribution unto every man according as he had need. This was a fine way to enable the church as a religious body to aid the poor and needy. All would share from the church treasury as the need arose among its members. This represented unity of purpose which they manifested in looking after the needs of all the members. They thus considered the work of the Lord and the support of the brethren in general a greater cause than making money and building up houses and lands. With most Christians today the reverse is the order; namely, making money and building large estates. One outstanding example of these Christians who gave his goods is here given: Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus, sold his land, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet (Verses 36, 37).

A similar spirit of charity should be manifested today for the poor and needy, and the up-keep of the church by the followers of Christ. “Greater care ought to be taken in the distribution of public charity that it be given to such as have need, such as are not able to procure a complete maintenance for themselves, through age, infancy, sickness, or bodily disability, or incapacity of mind, etc.” —Matthew Henry.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How did the early Christians manifest the spirit of

unity? Ask a member of the class to discuss the way the needs of the early church were supported. What was it that led the early disciples to sell their lands and give to the church? Should a similar spirit of religious support be manifest today by church people?

II. THE APPOINTMENT OF SEVEN DEACONS (Ac. 6: 1-7)

In this sixth chapter, and these first few verses, we have a study concerning the disagreement which arose among the church members, and the appointment of seven deacons. In the study of this scripture setting which occurred some-time later than the occasion of the foregoing discussion in the previous topic, we have a complaint, a murmuring among some of these church members. There seemed to have arisen some unhappy disagreement among some of the Grecians of the church. It was when the number of the disciples was multiplied to great numbers in Jerusalem that this murmuring arose among these Grecians against the Hebrews. These complainants were, according to Matthew Henry, "The Grecians—the Jews that were scattered in Greece, and other parts, who ordinarily spoke the Greek tongue, and read the Old Testament in the Greek version, and not the original Hebrew, many of whom being at Jerusalem at the feast embraced the faith of Christ, and were added to the church, and continued there."

Now note, these complained **because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration**, verse 1b. Here was a just cause for disagreement; for when a part of the church members, the Grecian widows, were plainly being neglected of those things which they stood in need of, it was time to make some complaint to the apostles. But note, **Hitherto**, sometime in the not distant past, **they were all with one accord**. Discord,

therefore, found its way among them as time passed. It might have been due to the coming into the church these Grecian brethren and sisters that brought about the difficulty. It was a matter, therefore, for the apostles to settle, for murmurings in the church would soon disrupt things.

The twelve apostles called together the multitude of disciples to have something done about the case. They said, **It is not reason that we should leave the work of God, and serve tables**, verse 2b. We are busily engaged in preaching the gospel. We have not the time to care for the poor and needy of the church. We are kept busy carrying the gospel and getting people to accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior. This complaint has come to us of the neglect of the poor widows, the poor Grecian widows. Something must be done about the matter. **The church** should appoint deacons, men of good report, to see after the needs of these poor people. They must not go unnoticed, and remain uncared for by the church. We must remember that "in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free," no distinction of Hebrews and Greeks, but all are to be one in Christ Jesus.

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, verse 3a. Find such men among your church members, and set them apart, that we may ordain them for this special work. Give them the task of looking after the church needs. Surely, they must be duly qualified for their work. First, they must be of honest report, free from any scandal, and looked upon by their neighbors as men of integrity. They must be men that can furnish fine testimonials concerning their character. Second, they must be filled with the Holy Spirit; that is to say, they must have those gifts and graces of the Spirit of the Lord which will fit them for their

work. Third, they must be full of wisdom. It was not enough that they were honest men, but that they must be discreet, judicious men who would conduct things in the best possible way for the whole church, showing no partiality toward anyone. Note, those who are entrusted with church affairs must be full of wisdom. This will apply also to public money in general as managed or held in trust by individuals or committees. Such were the qualifications special for the first board of deacons of the early church in Jerusalem.

It was for the church to nominate these persons—**look ye out among you seven men of honest report.** The membership of the church should be in position to know who, among their numbers, would best meet these qualifications. Therefore they were entrusted with the choice of the men best fitted for the work. Then when nominated by the church, the apostles would ordain them, appoint or set them over the work; give them their charge; and delegate to them their authority, so that the church as a whole might know to whom they were to look for the careful management of the affairs of the church. In this way the seven deacons were made overseers over the business matters of the church.

In verse four the apostles said, **We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.** Note here the two great gospel ordinances are the infallible Word of God, and sincere prayer to his holy name. So, by these two Christian principles the apostles declare their purpose to continue their undivided efforts in preaching the Word and offering intercessory prayers up for the lost that the kingdom of Christ might be advanced and many souls saved. Think how fitting are these words for ministers of the faith—continuing in prayer and the ministry of the word. This same teaching will apply today to the ministry, for it is always proper

for God's ministers to be ever faithful to the calling which he has given them.

The word of God increased. Remember, the apostles now resolved to stick to the promulgation of the gospel more than before. They so labored among the people that the word of the Lord increased greatly, not in a small way, but in a great manner. This increase of the gospel, sown among sinful people, increased as the seed sown increases when it comes up, grows into full fruitage, and yields some thirty, some sixty, and some hundred fold. These apostles went about sharing the gospel freely with others. They did this, let us believe, through personal work, through public testimony, through intercessory prayer, and through preaching the Word. They were zealous ministers of the gospel. They preached the need of repentance, the need of faith in Christ, and the need of salvation for lost souls through the shed blood of Christ on the cross. They were sincere; they were earnest workers; they were fired with the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim boldly the wonderful saving grace of Christ. Thus moved with such compassion for lost souls, these apostles went about doing a great work in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the word of God increased.

Therefore, **The number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, verse 7b.** Such were the fruits of the labors of the apostles of Christ. They sowed the seed, the blessed word of God in the hearts of many, and great was the harvest thereof. Note again, **A great company of priests were obedient to the faith.** These priests, who had most likely opposed the teachings of Christ, and who were least expected to embrace the faith, were moved by such great preaching to become obedient to the faith of the gospel. The spirit in which the apostles preached and testified of the goodness of the Lord drew, not a few,

but a great company of priests to Christ. This company of priests, whose religious convictions had been in the law of Moses, were now convinced and moved to be willing to embrace faith in Christ. By the grace of God, and through the faithful labors of these apostles this great crowd of priests were willing to renounce their former religious precepts and be obedient to the gospel of Christ. Thus they embraced the doctrine of the gospel, and pledged their obedience to the rules and precepts of it.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What was the cause of the complaint in the early church? How was this complaint handled by the apostles? What type of

men were chosen as deacons? What did the apostles pledge themselves to do more zealously after the ordaining of the seven deacons? Ask a member of the class to discuss the results of the labors of the apostles in Jerusalem. How are Christian workers to labor today in God's vineyard?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
The Martyrdom of Stephen.—Ac. 6: 8 through 7: 1-60; Isa. 54: 17; Lu. 21: 15; I Kg. 21: 10, 13; Matt. 23: 59, 60; Ac. 25: 8; Dan. 9: 26; De. 13: 9; Lu. 4: 29; Heb. 13: 12; Ac. 9: 14; Ps. 31: 5; Lu. 23: 46; Ac. 9: 40; 21: 5; Matt. 5: 44; Lu. 23: 34.

Lesson Five for Sunday, May 4, 1941

The Church Enlarging Its Fellowship (Acts 8)

Golden Text: Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Ac. 8: 4.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

Acts 8:

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem: and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word.

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud

voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: A. D. 36.

Place: Samaria, Gaza, city of the Philistines, Azotus, north of Gaza. Caesarea, a coastal city which was located midway between Joppa and Tyre.

Persons: Saul, Philip, Peter and John, and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1) To set forth the work of Philip the evangelist in Samaria.
- (2) To show how the persecution of the early church served to spread the Gospel.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 7: 58; 11: 19; 22: 20.

T.—Ac. 9: 1, 13, 21.

W.—Ac. 22: 4; 26: 10.

T.—Matt. 10: 23; Ac. 6: 5.

F.—Ac. 2: 38; 10: 48; 19: 2.

S.—Matt. 28: 19.

S.—Ac. 6: 6; 19: 6; Heb. 6: 2.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson is a discussion of the persecution of the early church by Saul and others, and of the spreading of the gospel in parts of Judea and Samaria by the scattered Christians. Saul is represented as the foremost of the persecutors among the opponents of the faith.

The persecution was waged against the believers in Christ with the view of uprooting the faith and the killing of the Christian church.

The results of Philip's preaching to the Samaritans was great evidence of the way the gospel was received by the people of that city. The scriptures reveal that the people gave heed to those things Philip spoke and did among them.

I. PAUL'S PART IN STEPHEN'S DEATH AND THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

(Ac. 8: 1-3)

And Saul was consenting unto his death. Here was one, Saul the persecut-

or, who rejoiced in the death of Stephen the first Christian martyr, and one of the seven deacons of the church in Jerusalem. He rejoiced because he thought it would stop the spread of Christianity. It was with delight and great satisfaction that Saul stood by as an eye witness while Stephen was being stoned to death.

1. The Leader in this Persecution:

A great persecution of the Christians followed in Jerusalem upon the death of Stephen. As a consequence, many of the believers in Christ fled to other parts of Judea and into Samaria, except the apostles. Observe here that Saul was the chief leader in this persecution of the Christians. He made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committing them to prison, verse 3. Remember, this persecution was waged against the church in Jerusalem. "He entered into every house where they used to hold their meetings, or every house that had any Christians in it, or was thought to have. No man was secure in his own house, though it was his castle."—Matthew Henry. Christ had forewarned his disciples that persecutions would arise because of the world. In this persecution Paul did all he could to kill the church and to convict its followers. His purpose was to uproot and completely destroy the gospel of Christ. Thus, he together with others who followed him

waged an intensive drive to search out and to bring to trial, prison or death the followers of Christ. The result was the scattering of many Christians out of Jerusalem into other parts of Judea and Samaria. But it did not result in killing the church.

2. The Scattered Christians Preach the Word:

They were all scattered abroad, verse 1b. Not the apostles, but many of the followers of Christ fled into other places to spread the gospel news by telling others of its saving power. "The attempt to extinguish a great fire by kicking the embers apart resulted in a new fire where each ember fell."—Tarbell's *Teachers' Guide*. Remember, the apostles had declared, at the time of the appointment of the seven deacons, "We will give ourselves continually to the ministry of the word." And note, **They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word**, verse 4. As these scattered Christians sought shelter in the towns and villages in parts of Judea and Samaria, they explained why they had come, and told the story of the gospel of Jesus. One writer has aptly said, "The stones of persecution are only winds which fan the fire of faith, and carry the sparks of truth to a distance." This telling of the story of Jesus on the part of the scattered followers brought latent talent to the surface; for those who were more gifted went about preaching the Word of God with great zeal, and winning new followers. They had become staunch witnesses for Christ. Remember also how their Master had told them that they were to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. Christians today should, when opposed, ridiculed, and made light of by scoffers of the Christian faith, go forth, as did these disciples of old, with new zeal and determination to stand firm and

true to the principles of the teachings of Christ.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Saul rejoice in seeing Stephen put to death? Why did many of the Christians flee into other parts of Judea and Samaria? Describe how the scattered followers of Christ preached the word. What should be the attitude of Christians today for the spreading of the gospel in the face of opposition at home and persecution abroad?

II. PHILIP'S PREACHING IN SAMARIA (Ac. 8: 4-8)

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them, verse 5. This was Philip the deacon who was ordained to serve tables in the Jerusalem church, not Philip the apostle who was one of the twelve disciples. Being filled with the Holy Spirit and possessed with a determination to preach the Word, he was advanced to the rank of an evangelist. Having used the office of a deacon well, he purchased to himself a good degree, and great boldness in the faith. (See I Tim. 3: 13, as parallel). Is it not true today that ministers of the gospel are to preach Christ and him crucified? All religious leaders and teachers should proclaim the Word with boldness. Now, the place of Philip's preaching was in the city of Samaria, though the Jews "had no dealing with the Samaritans." Note, the doctrine which he preached with great power and boldness unto these people was Christ the Savior of men. He was filled with a burning zeal for lost souls, and he went forth proclaiming the Word of God with power and great boldness.

1. His Works of Healing:

The people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did, verse 6. These Samaritans, with

one accord, not just a few, but many believed his testimony of the great power of Christ. In addition to his proclaiming the Word with power, he performed acts of healing in the name of Christ by driving out unclean spirits, healing the lame, the blind, the palsied, and those possessed with all manner of evil spirits. As a result great interest was shown by the people of Samaria in all that Philip spoke and performed among them, and many embraced the gospel of Christ. The evil spirits were thrust out by the supreme power of Christ through Philip's great work in the name of Christianity. The expression, **Crying with loud voice**, signifies the rebelliousness of sin and Satan in the hearts of sinners to be separated from them at the command of God. In other words, it represents the extreme difficulty which some people have in parting with evil tendencies and corrupt habits to accept the Christian way of living. But the grace of God as is found in the Gospel of Christ is designed for the divine healing of all who are spiritually lame, blind, paralytic, and cannot help themselves, (See Romans 5: 5, 6), and who will heed the Master's call. It is his divine will for all to be healed through his shed blood on Calvary. There are multitudes of condemned souls today who need this gospel healing applied to their hearts. The trouble is they reject the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

2. Great Joy Manifested:

There was great joy in that city. Such wonderful works as Philip performed in the name of Jesus brought conviction upon the city, and many professed faith in Christ and were baptized. The preaching of the gospel, in all of its purity and power, to any people is a just matter for rejoicing in any city or country. Both men and women rejoiced to behold such power of God manifested in their city through the masterful preaching and miraculous healing of this great evan-

gelist. The Psalmist has said, "O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy" (Ps. 67: 4). Remember, Jonah of old stirred up the people of Nineveh by his great preaching and caused many to turn unto God for mercy, (Jonah 3: 1-10). Many of these Samaritans became true worshippers of the Christian faith in deed and in truth. Their hearts were filled with joy, and they were ready to tell the glad tidings to others. The Gospel is glad tidings of great joy to all people who will believe it, and accept the teachings of Christ (Luke 2: 10). More people today should get greater joy from their worship of the Lord than they really do. In fact, there are too many people who fail to enter into religious worship wholeheartedly to sense deep joy in religious services.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What possessed Philip to go to Samaria to preach? Describe what he did there. How did the people receive him? How should people today receive the gospel and witness for Christ?

III. THE CHURCH ENLARGES ITS FELLOWSHIP (Ac. 8: 14-17)

In connection with Phillip's work in Samaria, it is to be noted that he could do no more than the work of an evangelist. Let us observe here that there were certain peculiar powers reserved to the apostles for the maintenance of the dignity of their office. Accordingly, Philip's evangelistic work among these Samaritans had to be investigated by the church at Jerusalem. Peter and John, therefore, were sent on this mission. They were foremost men among the apostles and thus were suited for this work. After inspecting the work, they gave their approval to what Philip had accomplished. Thus they heartily approved the report which had come to Jerusalem that Samaria had received the word of God (v. 14). Remember, the

two most noted apostles were sent by the church in Jerusalem for them to pass judgment upon Philip's evangelistic labors among the Samaritans. It was great encouragement to him to have two of the foremost apostles to approve his work, and to strengthen his position in Samaria.

1. The Holy Spirit Felt:

When Peter and John learned of the good work which Philip had done among the Samaritans, **they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost,** verse 15b. Matthew Henry's Commentary has the following statements on this point:

"It is said (v. 16) 'The Holy Ghost was as yet fallen upon none of them,' conveyed by the descent of the Spirit in these extraordinary powers which were upon the day of Pentecost. They were none of them endowed with the gift of tongues, which seems then to have been the most usual immediate effect of the pouring out of the Spirit. (See ch. 10: 45, 46.) This was both an eminent sign to those that believed not, and of excellent service to those that did. This and other such gifts, they had not, **only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**, and so enjoyed in him and interested in him, which was necessary to salvation, and in this they had joy and satisfaction (v. 8); though they could not speak in tongues."

It is true that converts who are indeed given up to Christ, and who have experienced the saving grace of God, have great reason to rejoice. We have reason to believe that Philip had received the gifts of the Holy Spirit himself, but did not have power to confer them upon the new converts. The apostles were to do this. "They did it not upon all that were baptized, but upon some of them."—Matthew Henry's Commentary. Note, the apostles prayed for these new

converts, and in answer to their prayer, the Holy Spirit came upon them.

"The laying on of hands was anciently used in blessing, by those who blessed with authority. Thus the apostles blessed these new converts, ordained some to be ministers, and confirmed others in their Christianity. We cannot now, nor can any, thus give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands." **Matthew Henry.** Christians are to pray earnestly for God's benedictions to be bestowed upon those who stand in need of prayer, and who seek divine aid through God's servants. They are to intercede for the lost and to lead them to Christ, exercising all the spiritual power that God has given to them.

2. Peter and John Preached the Word:

When they had testified and Preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem. When the two apostles had finished the business which they went to do, they applied themselves also to that which is common to any gospel minister; namely, they heartily testified to the word of the Lord which Philip had been preaching, and they preached the word as they passed through many villages of the Samaritans. Then they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel unto those with whom they came in contact.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why were Peter and John sent to investigate Philip's work in Samaria? Discuss what they did while in Samaria. What is Matthew Henry's view of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the new converts? What are Christians to do today for the lost and needy people?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Conversion of the Ethiopian.—Ac. 8: 26-40; Zeph. 3: 10; Jon. 12: 20; Isa. 53: 7, 8; Ac. 18: 28; Lu. 24: 27; I Kg. 18: 12; II Kg. 2: 16; Eze. 3: 12, 14.

Lesson Six for Sunday, May 11, 1941

The Responsibility of the Home Regarding Beverage Alcohol

(Deuteronomy 6; Jeremiah 35)

Golden Text: Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Prov. 22: 6.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Deuteronomy 6:

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart;

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Jeremiah 35:

5 And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

6 But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever:

7 Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.

8 Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters;

9 Nor to build houses for us to dwell in; neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed:

10 But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The book of Deuteronomy was written somewhere between 1450 and 1500 B. C. The chapter here quoted from the book of Jeremiah was probably written about 604 B. C.

Place: The book of Deuteronomy is devoted to spiritual matters revealed to the children of Israel while they were wandering for forty years in the wilderness. The prophecy of Jeremiah was given to Israel near or in the city of Jerusalem.

Persons: Moses, the children of Israel, Jeremiah and the Rechabites.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1) To teach the oneness of God; the commandment of love; the duty of teaching children the Scriptures; loyalty to a noble purpose; and the obedience to Christian principles.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Deut 4: 35, 39; Matt. 22: 37.

T.—Lu. 10: 27; Deut. 4: 9.

W.—Am. 2: 12; II Cor. 2: 9.

T.—Nu. 6: 2-4; I Chro. 2: 55; Lu. 1: 15.

F.—Gen. 25: 27; 36: 7; Ex. 20: 12; Heb. 11: 9.

S.—Pr. 6: 20; Eph. 6: 1; Col. 3: 20.

S.—Jer. 8: 14; II Kg. 24: 1, 2; Dan. 1: 1, 2.

THE INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we have a splendid study of some pointed scriptural truths; namely, the oneness of God, the great commandment of love, the duty of parents to teach the Scriptures to their children, loyalty of a great purpose, and the lesson of obedience to God's holy word.

Both teacher and students should make a careful study of each verse as given in the scripture text, together with the parallel reference verses given under the heading; **DAILY BIBLE READINGS**. Also, the lesson discussion should serve as profitable material for those who will make a worthwhile study of it. The example of the loyalty of the Rechabites is a fine study for everyone to pattern after, and to try to inculcate in the hearts of others.

1. THE ONLY TRUE AND LIVING GOD

(Deut. 6: 4-7)

1. The Truth that God Is One:

The Scriptures emphatically teach from beginning to end the truth of the existence of one true God. They teach that he is infinitely and eternally perfect; that he is self-existent and self-sufficient; and that he is all-wise and omnipotent. In St. Mark's Gospel, chapter twelve, verse thirty-two, the scribe replied to Jesus concerning the commandment, "Well, Master, thou has said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he." The Old and New Testament writers have declared this truth in their holy writings. All fair-minded people who will study the Bible with the view of learning the truth will admit that God is the one Supreme

Being who has created all and sustains all.

Verse four under discussion here is the command of God expressed through his servant Moses; namely, **Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord**. This is an exhortation addressed to all Israel for a strong manifestation of obedience to and faith in the one supreme God. The occasion of this command was given by Moses as the Israelites were encamped on the Plain of Moab, and from which they could view the Promised Land beyond the Jordan river. It was an excellent charge which Moses was delivering to the people. An implicit belief in the one supreme God, and an unflinching obedience to him were essential principles for the children of Israel to maintain for the rest of their lives. According to Moses' charge, their convictions concerning God and his commandments, statutes, and judgments were to rest upon the one great thought: **The Lord our God is one Lord**. Then, in verse five, follow the great command of love which the children of Israel were exhorted to manifest to this one supreme God of the universe.

2. The Great Commandment of Love:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, verse 5. Following the exhortation for them to have faith in the one true God, Moses, in the next verse, charged the Israelites to love, above everything else, the eternal God. Man's supreme challenge here is for him to love God with all his heart, soul and might. The relationship of man to God is that of son to father, and that of God to man is that of Creator and of universal love. The apostle Paul said that love, when compared with faith and hope, is the greatest of the Christian virtues (I Cor. 13: 13). The greatest duty of man is to love his supreme Creator above all other beings.

What should be the present-day application of this love of man to his God? We are to love God because he created us in his own likeness, and has promised us eternal life through our obedience to his holy word. We are to love him because he has provided a way, through his only begotten Son, of redemption from eternal condemnation and punishment to eternal life and happiness. Moreover, we are to love him: First, as the God of heaven, the supreme being; second, as our heavenly Father who has provided for us his Word as a guide to our pathway; and third, as our Provider and Sustainer of all that is good and needful in this material universe to meet our every temporal need. We are commanded to love him with **all our heart, and soul and might**. Thus, this love must come from the heart; therefore, it must be a sincere love, not merely expressed in words and by the tongue, but arising inwardly from the springs of one's spiritual nature. Such love to God quickens one's spiritual impulses, and causes him to rejoice in adoring the heavenly Father. Such love to God is an intelligent love. It is a love of purpose, of consolation and of expectation—culminating into the hope of witnessing eternal joy in heaven beyond this life. We are to love God in the sense of completeness; that is, to the limit of our spiritual natures, and with our hearts united in this love to him who has given us all the power which we have to adore his great name. In the study of this great Christian virtue, the student should take to heart seriously the need of applying it to his own life by loving God with all his heart, soul and strength.

3. The Duty to Teach God's Word:

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, verse 7a. Here is a command which Moses gave to the Israelites to teach God's word to their children. **Thou shalt teach them**—the commandments, statutes and judgments

of the Lord—to the children of Israel. Thus, it was important that the children should be instructed concerning God's Law, and his will toward his people from generation to generation. Teach the children to know the law that they may follow in the paths of righteousness! Let the Word of God be embedded in their hearts so that they may not err therefrom! Such was the charge of Moses to the people whom he had led through the wilderness to the Plain of Moab, within sight of the Promised Land. Accordingly, it was the duty of parents to teach "the commandments, statutes, and the judgments," to their children.

All who love the Lord God themselves should give their children religious instruction. Inasmuch as these words (verse 4 and 5), according to Moses, were to be kept in the hearts of the people, they should be taught, **said he** to their children. They should **know** the truths of God's holy word. Parents should teach their children God's word today in such a way as to impress upon their minds the values of religious truths, as they grow into the adolescent stage, that they will have great love for God, and will want to obey his holy will. "The teaching of things of God by fathers and mothers has a value and a virtue which can be supplied by none other."
—G. Campbell Morgan.

Thou shalt teach them diligently. Not a casual teaching of the word of God, but a diligent teaching is here emphasized. Teachers of the word of God to children must be **diligent**. The word must be made plain and easy. Teach so as to instil in their hearts a love for God's spiritual truths, and a desire to be obedient to his precepts.

"Oh, if our children all were brought
Betimes to God and duly taught
Pre-eminently blest were they;
His Law to honor and obey,

And bound as with a sevenfold cord
Would be our nation to the Lord."

—(Paraphrase of a Hebrew Midrash.)

CLASS DISCUSSION: What scriptural truths reveal the fact that there is but one God? Let the class discuss the great command of love. May the teacher impress upon the class the need of manifesting this great love to God at all times. Discuss the duty of parents to teach God's word to their children. How should children be taught the Word of God?

II. THE LOYALTY OF THE RECHABITES (Jer. 35: 5-10)

We have here a study of the loyalty of the Rechabites. They were descendants of the Kenites, a tribe which had journeyed with the Israelites in the wilderness life, as is described in the book of Exodus. In the time of Elijah, or thereabouts, the leader of the Rechabites was Jonadab, the son of Rechab. This Jonadab was so provoked at the corruption of the people in Israel that he required his people to take a pledge that they would "drink no wine for ever."

Another pledge which Jonadab had the Rechabites to make was that they were to dwell always in tents, to live away from the cities. Thus, it was thought that his tribe would not be influenced by the corrupt practices of other people. It is to be observed, however, that at the time when Nebuchadnezzar was about to invade the land of Judah with his great army, this tribe of Rechabites pitched their tents in the open space within the walls of the city of Jerusalem for safety. Accordingly, it was under this situation of the Rechabites that the prophet Jeremiah made his test of their loyalty to their vows.

1. The Test Made of their Loyalty:

These Rechabites were invited by

Jeremiah into one of the rooms that ranged around the temple courts. He then had wine set before them for the purpose of making his test of their loyalty. **I set before the sons of the house (tribe) of the Rechabites pots full of wine.** Here Jeremiah tells us is the way he placed the temptation before them. Let them see the rich red wine! Let them smell its sweet odors! Let their senses be moved to partake of it! Then, said he to them, **Drink ye wine.** This was an invitation, an encouragement for them to drink. "This was a sure test of their principles, for it was the great prophet himself who ordered them to drink."—Tarbell's Teachers' Guide.

Many good people today are tempted to partake of evil things. They are confronted not only with the liquor business, but also with various evil practices of un-Christian people over the country. This age is beset with many devices and types of gambling, with all manner of robbery, with graft, with deliberate and wreckless murders, with varied and sundry types of fraud, and with many forms of the practice of deception to corrupt society and to destroy good morals. But good men and women, like the Rechabites, should show their faithfulness to justice and honor. In this connection, R. C. Gillie has well stated the stand which right thinking people should manifest at all times:

"Men who are faithful to their convictions must sometimes take their stand as the Rechabites did. There may be no opportunity for argument. They may stand for the moment entirely alone. Their attitude may appear to be mere obstinacy. What is supremely important to them may seem merely futile to others. It matters not. The best way to educate conscience is to obey it. Tenacity of conviction is the best fiber of manhood."

2. Their Refusal to Drink Wine:

Now, note what the Rechabites did. Although the prophet had set before them the temptation, they flatly refused to drink wine. They said, We will drink no wine. We have made a pledge to our leader, Jonadab, that we would not drink wine, for he has commanded us, saying, **Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever.** The Rechabites having witnessed the great corruption of Israel in the use of strong drink, took this pledge in all faith and good conscience, and thus expected to abide by it. Thus, the answer to the test—the temptation of strong drink—was emphatically NO. They had their minds well fixed upon their sacred pledge to abstain from strong drink. This is a splendid example for everyone to observe in our own day.

May we ask the question: How should the example of the Rechabites be observed today by both the young people and the adults? What attitude should they take toward intoxicating liquors? As writer of the **ADVANCED QUARTERLY**, and as a strong advocate against liquor, we are urging every student of this Sunday School quarterly

to not only abstain from any and all uses of intoxicating beverages, but also to warn others not to indulge in the use of them in any form. Moreover, we insist that the teachers of the **ADULT QUARTERLY** stress, in the teaching of this lesson especially, the great need today of people abstaining from the use of any intoxicating beverages whatsoever. Everyone should take a firm stand, as did these Rechabites, on the principle of right, and say NO to all enticements of strong drink.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Who were the Rechabites, and under what circumstances were they placed at the time of their temptation? Who made the test and how did he make it? How did the Rechabites respond to the test? How should people today act toward intoxicating liquors? What stand should young people and adults take concerning the prevalent evils of the day?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Jeremiah Teaching an Object Lesson.—Jer. 35: 7-19; 32: 33; Isa. 28: 9-12; 30: 9; Jer. 18: 11; Deut. 6: 14; Ac. 26: 20; Mi. 3: 12; Lu. 13: 34, 35; Rom. 10: 21; Eph. 6: 1-3.

Lesson Seven for Sunday, May 18, 1941

Broadening Christian Horizons: Saul's Conversion (Acts 9)

Golden Text: I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Ac. 26: 19.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

Acts 9:

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, whether they

were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

8 And Saul arose from earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight,

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: It was probably in A. D. 36 when Saul was converted. The later events in this chapter are believed to have occurred in A. D. 37 and 38.

Place: Saul was converted near Damascus, which is approximately 150 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Damascus is in Syria. The city of Tarsus was located in the southeastern part of Asia Minor, on the Cyndus River, ten miles from the seacoast.

Persons: Saul, the chief priest, Ananias and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To show Saul's determination to persecute the disciples to the limit.
- (2). To set forth the power of Christ to make of Saul a chosen vessel for the glory of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 8: 3; Ga. 1: 13; I Tim. 1: 13.
 T.—Ac. 22: 6; 26: 12; I Cor. 15: 8.
 W.—Matt. 25: 40; Ac. 22: 9; 26: 13.
 T.—Ac. 21: 39; 22: 3.
 F.—Ac. 22: 16; I Cor. 1: 2; II Tim. 2: 22.
 S.—Ac. 25: 22; 26: 17; I Cor. 15: 10.
 S.—I Tim. 2: 7; II Cor. 11: 23.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson has to do with Saul, the great persecutor of the Christian church.

He was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia which was a free city of the Romans. He was a free man of that city. His parents were both native Jews, therefore, he called himself a "Hebrew of the Hebrews." He was of the tribe of Benjamin which adhered to Judah.

Saul's early education was in the schools of Tarsus, which was a "little Athens" for learning of that day. In his early school life he acquainted himself with the Greek philosophy and poetry. Later on he was sent to the

University of Jerusalem to study divinity and the Jewish Law. Gamaliel, who was an eminent Pharisee, was his great teacher.

Saul's part in the persecution of the disciples of Christ is recorded by St. Luke in the book of Acts. In this study the student will find the scripture references and the lesson discussions helpful in acquainting himself with a more adequate knowledge of Saul's hatred for the followers of Jesus, and the strange manner in which he was converted.

I. SAUL THE PERSECUTOR (Ac. 9: 1, 2)

We have here the study of the foremost persecutor of the Christian religion. Note in the beginning, Saul had not only consented to Stephen's death and had started the persecution of the disciples in Jerusalem, as was shown in last week's lesson, but also he continued breathing out threatenings and slaughter against Christ's followers elsewhere.

1. His Enmity and Rage against Christianity:

Not being satisfied with Stephen's death and the scattering of many of the disciples from Jerusalem into other parts of Judea and Samaria, he breathed out hatred and ill-will in his persistence to search out and bring to trial every follower of Christ that he possibly could. Saul lost no time nor did he slacken efforts in his determination to persecute the Christian church. He sought to terrify them, and to break their spirit and loyalty to the cause of Christ. His "breathing out threatenings" expresses the violent anger which he manifested against the small group of Christ's believers. He, nevertheless, pursued vehemently his course with speed and cruel craftiness to satisfy his bitter passion for prosecuting the innocent disciples. Matthew Henry says, "He breathed death to the Christians

wherever he came." See also Acts 8: 3 and I Tim. 1: 13.

The Christian church and its followers have experienced persecutions all down the centuries from the days of Saul to the present time. Christians today, in many lands and countries, are being ridiculed and persecuted for the cause of Christ. But the faithful student of the Bible who is a staunch follower of Christ will remain steadfast and endure the hardships for the crown of eternal life, and for the salvation of lost souls. Thus, may we get a lesson here that, while Saul prosecuted vigorously the early Christians, those faithful followers remained steadfast and advanced the cause of Christ wherever they went. Accordingly, followers of Christ should stand firm upon the principles of Christianity, and seek to spread the "good news" among those who stand in need of the Gospel. Severe tests of persecutions should serve as goads to spur us on to greater faithfulness in serving the Master's cause.

2. His Particular Design upon the Christians at Damascus:

Being not content with his vehement persecution in Jerusalem, Saul went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem, verse 2. Dr. Martha Tarbell says, "How Paul's rage must have increased when he found that his persecution of the church at Jerusalem had only driven the Christians away from the city to spread elsewhere the knowledge of that Jesus whom he hated!" Here we have further evidence of Saul's bitterness against the disciples of Christ. Therefore, upon learning that some had fled to Damascus, he sought the sanction and authority of the high priest that he might go with proper credentials to that city, and ar-

rest any that he might find of this way. His hatred and malice was so great that he went in hasty pursuit to find in the synagogues, if possible, "any of this way." He meant for them to have no rest nor peace there, but that both men and women should be seized and brought back to Jerusalem for trial and possible execution. Relative to the expression, "any of this way," Tarbell's Teachers' Guide says, "This is the first use in The Acts of the term 'The Way' applied to the followers of Christ. We are told that the term is Hebrew instead of Greek in its origin, the equivalent of Hebrew *Halakah*, meaning walk or manner of life."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask a member of the class to discuss Saul's persecution against the disciples of Christ. Describe his attitude toward the scattered disciples in Damascus. How should Christians today act in the face of ridicule and persecution of the Christian religion?

II. GOD ARRESTS THE PERSECUTOR IN HIS COURSE (Ac. 9: 3-9)

Paul was suddenly arrested by a bright light as he approached the city of Damascus. There is an old saying, "Man proposes but God disposes," and here is a clear case of a man who was definitely set upon his way to carry out his plan. But God intercepted him before he could accomplish his fixed purpose. Human wills, ways and purposes are finite, and changeable; but God's power is infinite and eternal, ever surpassing man's laws, or scope of active force or operation.

1. The Light:

As Paul was nearing the city of Damascus, a light—more dazzling than the Syrian sun—shone round about him. It was a glorious light from heaven. Note, the Lord Jesus was in this light,

and appeared unto Paul on the way (V. 17). It was a great light which was brighter than the noonday sun (Ch. 26: 13), for it was visible at mid-day. Paul heard the Lord's call which came to him, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Why are you persecuting my disciples? Why are you scattering them by your hatred, ill-will and bitter prosecution of them? Know you not what you are doing against the cause of Christ? It was a sudden and an unexpected incident to Paul. He had no time for thought or meditation at that moment, but was smitten blind, and fell to the ground. Is it not true that Christ's manifestations of himself to poor, lost souls are sudden and very surprising many times, but he anticipates them with blessings of his wonderful goodness to them.

2. Paul's Conversion:

This strange phenomenon visited upon Paul marks the great change in his life. He cried out, *Who art thou, Lord?* Yes, here was the cry of the great persecutor of the Christian church, and from the one who had reached the end of his own strength. He was now ready to give to the Lord Jesus a chance with him. As he trembled and was greatly astonished at all that had happened to him, he cried out again, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? What is your will toward me? What can I do for your cause?* Let us remember, "He did not dispute, evade nor rationalize the vision," but asked that God's will be done in him. What wilt thou have me to do?" The truly converted person will be willing to do service for the Lord.

What did it mean? Think what a wonderful change was wrought here in the life of Paul! Changed from a vile sinner, blasphemer, and persecutor to a chosen vessel of the Lord. How mysterious and wonderful it all was, and yet it occurred at nonday in the presence of

those who were fellow-travelers with him to Damascus. Christ's cleansing power was focused that day upon Saul's sin-cursed soul, and it made him a chosen vessel for the glory of God. It meant that the most persistent antagonist of the early Christian church became the greatest missionary for the cause of Christ that the world has ever had. His example of devotion and Christian service has never been equaled by anyone in any age. His inspired writings in the New Testament reveal the course which he pursued for the cause of Christianity, and serve as the great study of Christian missions for all students of the Bible.

Note, three accounts of Saul's conversion are given in the book of Acts; namely, in our text for today; in chapter 22: 5-16; and in chapter 26: 12-18.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe what took place while Paul was on his way to Damascus. Describe the light that was seen that day. How was Paul affected by the incident and what did he do?

III. GOD EMPLOYS ANANIAS AS THE HUMAN HELPER (Ac. 9: 10-16)

The Holy Spirit will arrest and convict wretched souls, sometimes in mysterious manner, of their vile wickedness. So it was in the case of Saul, but the Lord sent Ananias to complete the work. God has ever had need of proper individuals in his kingdom work. Let us note here that this was not the Ananias who lied to the apostle Peter in Jerusalem concerning giving to the church. There is a story told of a Labrador Eskimo who named his baby Ananias, but he explained to the missionary that he was named "not after Ananias the liar, but after the good Ananias, who gave Saul back his sight."

1. God in the Vision:

God appeared to Ananias in a vision,

saying, Arise and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, . . . behold, he prayeth, verse 11b. This devout man was the disciple whom God singled out to do this special service for him. But, like Moses of old, he immediately made an excuse. At first it would seem he had very good reasons for fear upon coming in contact with Saul the persecutor. Said he, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem, verse 13. He is a bad man. He has persecuted the disciples in Jerusalem, and scattered many of them abroad. And now he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name, verse 14. He has come to Damascus to terrify, to arrest, and to take back to Jerusalem your followers for trial and possible execution. He is a man to be feared greatly.

2. The Lord's Commission:

But, when God lays his hand on a person to be his spokesman, his messenger, he does not take excuses for an answer. So, the Lord said to Ananias, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me. You need not fear Saul now, for he has become a converted man. He is to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings and the Children of Israel. You go and tell him. Here was the assurance to Ananias that Saul was to be henceforth a chosen vessel for the Lord. There is no need, therefore, for any of the disciples to stand in dread of him, but you go and tell him that I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake, verse 16.

Such was God's commission to Ananias, and he obeyed the command. Obedience is the first duty of man to his God. Thus, God used Ananias as a human helper to preform a definite work. Today God needs human helpers to carry on his kingdom work. More

and better prepared teachers of his Word are needed in many places. Students of the Young People's and of the Adult classes are needed to do more missionary work in their neighborhoods to get others to attend church and Sunday School. More mission workers are needed in the home and foreign fields for Christ. God is calling, we believe, some of the young as well as some of the old to do definite things for him in this world of sin and great persecution. Is it not true, then, that they should obey his call, and do service for the spreading of the Gospel?

CLASS DISCUSSION: How did God use Ananias here in connection with Paul's conversion? Why did Ananias fear Paul? What did Ananias finally do? How should Christians obey God's commission? What good work may members of the Young People's and the Adult classes do for the glory of God?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
Early Days of Saul's New Life in Christ.
—Ac. 9: 17-31; Gal. 1: 13, 23; II Cor. 11: 23, 32; Ac. 22: 17; Gal. 1: 17, 18; Ac. 4: 36; 13: 2; Ac. 6: 1; 11: 20; II Cor. 11: 26.

Lesson Eight for Sunday, May 25, 1941

Broadening Christian Horizon: Peter's Vision

(Acts 10: 1—11: 18)

Golden Text: And Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. Ac. 10: 34.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Acts 11:

5 I was in the city of Joppa, praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter: slay, and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The conversion of Cornelius occurred in A. D. 41. Peter's subsequent defense of his part in this great episode was sometime later.

Place: Cornelius' conversion took place in Caesarea, a city about seventy miles from Jerusalem and near the Mediterranean Sea. Peter's defense of his act occurred in Jerusalem.

Persons: Cornelius, Peter and the Apostles in Jerusalem.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To teach, through the apostle Peter's preaching at Cornelius' house, that the Gospel of Christ is for Jew and Gentile alike.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 10: 45; Gal. 2: 12.

T.—Ac. 10: 9, 19, 23.

W.—Jon. 16: 13.

T.—Joel 2: 28; Matt. 3: 11.

F.—Jon. 1: 26; 2: 33.

S.—Ac. 10: 47; 15: 8, 9.

S.—Rom. 10: 12, 13; 15: 9, 16.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with the apostle Peter's account to the church in Jerusalem concerning the conversion of Cornelius. As an introduction to this lesson, we are directing the student to read the tenth chapter of the book of The Acts. St. Luke has recorded in it the account of Peter's taking the Gospel to the Gentiles. It is important that the student read with care the entire chapter to acquire a clear understanding of the incident which the apostle Peter related to the Jerusalem church.

Moreover, for the student's guidance and convenience, we are giving herewith a skeleton outline of the tenth chapter:

I. THE GOSPEL GIVEN TO THE GENTILES (Acts 10: 1-48)

I. Cornelius' Vision of the Angel
(vs. 1-6)

II. Cornelius Sends Messengers to Peter (vs. 7, 8)

III. Peter's Vision on the Housetop
(vs. 9-16)

IV. Peter Receives the Messengers
(vs. 17-22)

V. Peter Obeys the Call (vs. 23-33)

VI. Peter's Sermon: Salvation through Faith in Christ (vs. 34-43)

VII. The Holy Spirit Given to the Gentiles (vs. 44-48)

I. THE APOSTLES' DISAPPROVAL OF PETER'S DEED (Ac. 11: 1-4)

In the beginning of this study, we are to note that, when the brethren; that is to say, the apostles at Jerusalem had heard of the incident which had occurred at Cornelius' house, they raised opposition to Peter's deed. Moreover, in their minds, Peter had done an act which was wholly irregular and positively unlawful. And what did he mean by it? We must have explanation of his act. According to one writer in *The Pulpit Commentary*, Peter had simply obeyed the will of God. Note this statement: "We know that he had simply followed the instructions which he had received from Christ, and that he could not possibly have acted otherwise without downright disobedience." When Peter had returned to Jerusalem, the brethren rebuked him severely for having gone into the house of the Gentiles. They said, *Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them, verse 3. You*

have committed a serious act. You have placed yourself in question for having done such an act in Cornelius' house. But the apostle Peter had obeyed the voice of God, and had performed an act that meant the removing of the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile. Such was included in Christ's Great Command, "Go ye. . ."

Let us remember, "The gospel had been given to the hated Samaritans, but they had Jewish blood in their veins, and they kept the commandments of Moses. Philip had taught and baptized the Ethiopian, but Philip was not one of the apostles, and his was only a special case."—Tarbell's *Teachers' Guide*. But to the apostles, Peter's case was different; he must be reckoned with for such an act, for fear that the brethren should receive at the hands of the Jews severe criticism for one of their apostles going out and eating and mingling with uncircumcised Gentiles. Thus, it became necessary for Peter to defend himself before the church in Jerusalem.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did the apostles at Jerusalem rebuke Peter for preaching in Cornelius' house? What had they failed to understand concerning the Great Commission? What right did they have to object to Gentiles having the Gospel preached to them?

II. PETER'S JUSTIFICATION OF HIS ACTION BEFORE THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM (Ac. 11: 5-17)

I. Peter Relates the Story to the Church:

The apostle Peter gave an account of what had happened leading up to the event which took place in Cornelius' house. He began by telling the brethren that, as he was praying on the housetop one day in Joppa, he fell in a trance. He saw a great receptacle, a sheet with four corners. It was being let down

from heaven toward him. He saw all manner of beasts and creeping things in it. He saw fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts. It was a vision strange and unexpected to him.

He related further that he heard a voice from heaven, saying, **Arise, Peter; slay and eat.** You are hungry, therefore, kill and eat to satisfy your desire for food. What you have seen is a picture of the things which are used for the natural food for the body. Partake of them by slaying and eating for your physical comforts. But Peter related to them that he replied in this fashion: **Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth,** verse 8. Dr. Martha Tarbell says in this connection, "While some of the animals mentioned in Peter's vision were regarded by the Jews as clean, that is, fit for food, they had become unclean according to the Jewish belief by contact with those held to be unclean."

Moreover, the apostle told the brethren that the voice came from heaven to him, saying, **What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.** Said he again by the way of emphasis, to the assembled Church in Jerusalem, to hear his story of justification, **This was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.** Doubtless, Peter took this to mean, at least for the time-being, that the Mosaic regulations as to food were abolished in order that Jew and Gentile might associate together and eat together. But it had, very soon, deeper meaning for him. It came to mean to him that no person was to be regarded as common or unclean; that is to say, none were to be regarded too common or unclean for Jesus not to be willing to save from sin, and to call his own through their faith and obedience unto him.

Then the apostle told of the three messengers who had come from Caes-

area to see him. They had been sent by Cornelius the centurion, a Roman official located in that town. When they had told their story as given to them by Cornelius, Peter stated that **The Spirit bade me go with them.** It was a call to go to see Cornelius, who had had also a vision from God in the form of an angel. Thus, paying no heed that they were Gentiles, but being directed by the Spirit of the Lord, I went to see Cornelius. **Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me.** They are witnesses concerning what took place at Cornelius' house. Since the call came and the Spirit directed, I obeyed and went to see what Cornelius desired of me.

Would it not be of more advantage to all Christendom today if every true child of God should, like the apostle Peter, follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit? It certainly would. More good would be accomplished for the glory of God, and greater joy would come to the hearts of sincere believers in Christ Jesus.

With reference to the six brethren, Jewish believers in Christ, who went with Peter from Joppa to Caesarea to see Cornelius, Dr. Martha Tarbell has the following comment:

"With wise forethought, which we would not naturally expect from impulsive Peter, he took with him as witnesses six Jewish believers, went to Caesarea, and entered the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, captain of the army. Cornelius was a God-fearing proselyte who observed the Jewish hours of prayer and whose prayers and alms were acceptable to God, we are told in Acts 10: 1-4. He explained to Peter how he, a proud Roman, had sent for a Jew to come and give him enlightenment: an angel had come to him and had bade him send to Joppa for Peter, who would tell him how he and his household might be saved. 'Thou hast well done that thou art come.' Cornelius told him. Now therefore we

are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.'"

2. The Coming of the Holy Spirit upon Them:

Peter said, **As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, verse 15a.** As the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, so He came while Peter was preaching in Cornelius' house. Peter was convinced, we are quite confident, that God had set his approval upon the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles by sending the Holy Spirit upon them that day. It is quite evident that it was the Lord's will that they should be baptized and be received into the fellowship with the Jewish believers. Had he refused to obey the call to go and preach in Cornelius' house, he would have been opposing God's holy will.

"Vs. 15 and 16 make it clear that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and the others was a "baptism with the Holy Spirit." Peter says that when he saw what occurred he remembered "the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." There are those who deny this, and tell us that the phrase "baptized with the Holy Spirit" should be confined to the Pentecostal experience, but it is definitely stated in ch. 10 that the Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles in Cornelius' house (v. 45). It is evident, also, that the "baptism with the Holy Spirit" is not merely an experience given to the Church as a body, but for the individual believer. It is evident from these verses that the laying on of hands of an apostle, or any other hands, is not essential to the receiving of the gift, for there was no laying on of hands in this case."—Dr. R. A. Torrey.

Note Peter's defense further of his case. Inasmuch as God has given unto

them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus, who was I that I could withstand God? Why should I have refused this opportunity to testify for the Lord in Cornelius' house? Should I have withstood God's call to go and preach to the Gentiles with Cornelius? I went, therefore, feeling it my duty to enlighten them concerning the Gospel of Christ.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the manner in which the apostle Peter defended himself before the Church in Jerusalem. Explain the manner in which the Holy Spirit came upon those at Cornelius' house. What is Dr. R. A. Torrey's explanation concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them?

III. THE VERDICT OF THE CHURCH (Ac. 11: 18)

The apostle Peter had made his position quite clear. He had shown to the church that what he had done was directed by the hand of God. There was no question about that. There was nothing which the apostles could say against him, for he had performed the act in the name of Jesus. Accordingly, they held their peace. They could only agree with him now in what he did for the centurion, and others who believed on the Lord

Jesus Christ. They glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Thus, it was shown that all doors unto the house of God were flung wide open for Jew and Gentile alike for the reception of the Gospel of Jesus. The "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile had been removed, and salvation was to be preached to the Gentile as well as to the Jew. The apostle Paul said in Romans 10: 12, "There is now no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and he is rich unto all that call upon him." So, a great lesson was here taught by the incident of Peter in Cornelius' house for all the apostles and disciples to observe, and then go forth to preach the Gospel in all of its purity to Jew and Gentile alike, seeking to bring to Christ all that would be saved.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the attitude of the apostles when Peter had finished relating to them the story of his visit to Cornelius' house.

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Apostle Peter Imprisoned by Herod.—Ac. 12: 1-19; Ac. 10: 3, 17; 11: 5; Ps. 34: 7; Dan. 3: 28; 6: 22; II Pet. 2: 9; Heb. 1: 14; Ac. 4: 23; 15: 37; Ac. 13: 16; 19: 33; 21: 40.

Lesson Nine for Sunday, June 1, 1941

Broadening Christian Horizons: The Antioch Movement (Acts 11)

Golden Text: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Rom. 1: 16a.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

Acts 11:

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled, as far as Phe-

nice and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were

come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he

brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea:

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The events of this lesson occurred during A. D. 43 and 44.

Place: The city of Antioch in Syria was the place in which the scattered disciples preached the gospel for sometime. The city is located on the left bank of the Orontes River, and about fifteen miles inland from the Mediterranean coast. It is in the northern extremity of Syria.

Persons: Barnabas, Paul, Agabus and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To show that the persecution of the church served as an impetus or stimulus for the spreading of the Gospel.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 8: 1; 6: 1; 9: 29.

T.—Ac. 2: 47; 9: 35; Lu. 1: 60.

W.—Ac. 13: 43; 14: 22.

T.—Ac. 5: 14; 6: 5.

F.—Ac. 13: 1; 21: 9.

S.—I Cor. 12: 28; Eph. 4: 11.

S.—Ac. 21: 10; Rom. 15: 26.

THE INTRODUCTION

Both teacher and student will find the study of the work of the disciples in Antioch quite interesting. As the lesson is carefully studied, it will be seen that Barnabas and Paul played an important part in strengthening the work and spreading the Gospel in that city among the people.

Antioch was situated on the Orontes

River in Syria. The scriptures which bear upon this particular place where the scattered disciples preached and taught the Word, reveal a splendid work begun in the name of Christ.

I. THE SPREADING OF THE CHURCH (Ac. 11: 19-21)

The scattering of the disciples meant the spreading of the Gospel. The planting and watering of a church at Antioch in Syria has been recorded by St. Luke in these few verses. The intense persecution of the disciples by the bitter opponents of Christianity scattered the followers of Christ into many places. The purpose of the persecution, however, did not stop the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Christ. Moreover, it

served as a fan to intensify the flame of love for the Master's cause, and to scatter the sparks of Christian faith among the people in other towns and cities in other countries.

1. Places where the Scattered Disciples Preached:

Some of the disciples went as far as Phoenicia, which was to the north of Palestine, and bordered on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Some fled to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean and not very far from the coast of Asia. These disciples spread the Christian faith there among the people in the villages and towns by preaching and telling the wonderful truths of the gospel of Jesus. Then there were others who went to Cyrene, principal city of Cyrenaica, in northern Africa, which lay between Carthage and Egypt, and corresponded to the modern Tripoli. Thus, there on the northern shores of Africa seeds of the Christian faith were planted by that group of the scatter-followers of Christ. There were those who went to Antioch in Syria, which lay north of Palestine. In that city of 200,000 population, situated on the Orontes River and sixteen miles from the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, the dispersed disciples told the story of Jesus and his love for lost humanity.

2. Divine Approval:

And the hand of the Lord was with them, verse 21a. These are assuring words, for they point out the fact that God was with these persecuted followers of Christ. His Holy Spirit guided them and gave power to proclaim the wonderful truths of the gospel. Note, while the opponents of the Christian faith sought to uproot and to destroy the Gospel of Christ, the Lord purposed to plant it wherever the scattered believers should go for peace, protection and the spreading of the seeds of righteousness. They did not flee from their

Christ and his holy Word, but rather placed themselves into a larger field of service for the cause of lost humanity. Yes, these faithful disciples carried their religion along with them wherever they went from city to city. Consequently, both Jew and Gentile soon began to hear and receive the Word of God.

In this troublesome day, Christian people everywhere should take their religion with them, like these early disciples did, and stand by it under any and all circumstances. It is the only thing that will suffice in this life and the life to come. Each student of the Word of God should take this fundamental Christian principle to heart and live it day by day. It will be a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their pathway, (See Ps. 119: 105).

3. The Rich Results:

And a great number believed and turned unto the Lord, verse 21b. Note here the fruits of their labors. **A great number**, not one here and there, but a great number believed their gospel preaching, and turned to God for mercy and pardon. Thus a harvest of souls was gathered in for the cause of Christ. Thus, God prospered his faithful laborers with a rich harvest of many souls for the kingdom of righteousness. Faithfulness and persistent effort is the very essence of rich rewards and inexpressible joy. Just so, the persecution turned out to be a missionary society for the promulgation of the gospel and the salvation of lost souls. God's word will not return unto him void, for Christ said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

When the hand of the Lord is upon his messengers, he is always there to bless their labors, and will assure them success. This is no less true today than it was then. As these disciples preached and told the story of Jesus, the power

of divine grace worked upon the hearts of many who were moved to accept the gospel teachings, and joined ranks with Christ's followers. When zealous ministers of Christ today preach and teach the Word of God in all of its purity and saving power, sinners will be moved, as many did in those early days of the gospel, to believe in it and to accept its teachings. Teachers and students of the scriptures should so imbibe the Word as to not only be willing to obey its commandments, but also to impress it upon others. This is the great need today in every land. God has promised to be with his children if they will obey his holy word.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Into what parts did the scattered disciples take the gospel teachings of Christ? Describe how the Divine approval was with these dispersed followers of Jesus. What were the results of their labors wherever they went? What should be the attitude of Christians in the spread of the gospel?

II. THE MISSION AND WORK OF BARNABAS IN ANTIOCH (Ac. 11: 22-26)

Who was Barnabas? According to Acts 4: 36, as a man he was Joseph (Joses), a Levite of the island of Cyprus. (See Dr. William Smith's *A Dictionary of the Bible*.) He was one of the early disciples of Christ.

1. Sent to Antioch:

When the good tidings of the great number of believers in Christ came unto the ears of the church at Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to Antioch to see what was being accomplished in the name of the Lord. The disciples in the Jerusalem church were anxious to know what success the Lord's followers were meeting with in that city in Syria. When Barnabas had entered into the city, inspected the work, and had seen the grace

of God, he was made to rejoice. He approved the work of the disciples there, and exhorted them all to stand firm to the word of God.

Matthew Henry says, "The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas thither, to nurse this new-born church, and to strengthen the hands both of preachers and people, and put a reputation upon the cause of Christ there." They sent him forth as an envoy, a helper from them to encourage and to assist in such a wonderful beginning of the gospel in that city. It is well for mother churches to send help and encouragement to newly established churches and mission points in adjacent districts to encourage, strengthen and develop strong Christian centers of worship among the new converts. They should send some of the best men and women they have to such new plantings of the gospel so that their spiritual power and influence will be greatly felt and appreciated by the new believers in Christ Jesus.

2. His Character:

Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. Note the scripture here: "A good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." It takes a good man to be possessed by the Holy Spirit. He must have faith in God, and have a burning zeal for the gospel to make the best servant for Christ. He was chosen by the Jerusalem church because of his fine Christian spirit, and the burning zeal which he had in his heart for lost souls. His splendid Christian character, therefore, fitted him for the mission upon which the church sent him to Antioch. God rejoices in having such men in his kingdom work, for they add greatly to the cause of righteousness. In view of Barnabas' fine qualities as a Christian worker, and his wonderful help with those in Antioch, there is good reason that much people was added unto the Lord, verse 24b.

3. Paul Secured as Fellow Worker:

Remember, it was through the efforts of Barnabas that the church at Jerusalem had sometime before accepted Paul as a brother disciple after his conversion. Remember also that Paul had had to flee from Jerusalem because of his persecutors. He took refuge in Tarsus, his home town in Cilicia. Ten or twelve years had passed since that time. But now Barnabas needs Paul's help in the church at Antioch. Accordingly, he knew the very man whom he should get to aid in accomplishing a great work there. Dr. J. D. Jones says, "When he went to Tarsus for Paul and brought him back to Antioch he knew quite well what he was doing. He had not forgotten the old days when Paul carried everything before him. He knew Paul was much the abler and stronger man. He knew if Paul came to Antioch he must inevitably take first place. But Barnabas never heeded that. All he cared for was the progress of the work, and perhaps this is the ultimate evidence of Barnabas' goodness. Because envy lurks even in good men's souls."

3. Consequences of the Labors:

Barnabas returned from Tarsus to Antioch with Paul. They went to work in that city to win souls for the kingdom of God. For a whole year they were gathered together with the church, verse 26b. It is well to observe here that these two strong men of God joined in with the church—the other disciples there—and began to strengthen the work. That was showing the proper spirit of brotherly love and co-operation both for the other disciples and for the extension of Christianity in Antioch. Such Christian spirit should be manifested in our own day by all qualified church leaders everywhere.

They taught much people. Note here the teaching of the scriptures to many

people. Paul and Barnabas saw the great need for the people to learn the gospel truths concerning sin, repentance, faith in Christ, forgiveness, redemption and eternal life. Yes, they taught **much people**. Let us believe many went to hear the gospel preached and explained unto them. Stress was placed upon teaching the Word of God. That was the important thing. It is even important today because everyone should have a clear understanding of God's promises and commandments for his people. Only qualified teachers of the scriptures, men and women who are true Christians and possess adequate knowledge of the Bible, should be employed to teach the Sunday School classes. Correct teaching and preaching of the word go together, and the purpose is to instruct and exhort people to become true followers of Christ.

4. Disciples Called Christians:

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch, verse 26c. Before this particular time, the disciples were called "those of the Way." They were also called "learners, the faithful, saints, disciples, believers, brethren." The orthodox Jews were accustomed to call them "the Nazarines." Prior to this time, all had been Jews or else Jewish proselytes. The disciples were, up to this time, practically a sort of Jewish sect.

"It has been thought that Christian was a nickname by the people of Antioch in derision, in the same spirit as since then have been given the now honored names Protestant, Puritan, Wesleyan, Methodist. The Greek word is *Christos*, and it is very similar to another Greek word, *Chrestos*, which was sometimes used ironically for "a good fellow." The people of Antioch were noted for their witty epigrams, and in their term of *Christianoi* there may have been a play upon words."—Tarbell's Teachers' Guide.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the

type of person Barnabas was. Why did the church at Jerusalem send him to Antioch? What did he do when he arrived in the city? Why did Barnabas go to Tarsus for Paul? Describe the labors of Barnabas and Paul for one year in Antioch. By what names were the early disciples called? How did the name "Christian" arise?

(EXPLANATORY NOTE: Since we

do not have sufficient space here to give to the third topic of this lesson, we are placing it in the ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY.)

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:

The Liberality of the Church at Antioch.—Ac. 11: 27-30; 13: 1; 21: 9, 10; 15: 32; 19: 6; Rom. 12: 6; I Cor. 12: 10, 28, 29; Eph. 4: 11; Rom. 15: 26; I Cor. 16: 1; II Cor. 9: 1; Ac. 12: 25.

Lesson Ten for Sunday, June 8, 1941

Beginning of World Missions (Acts 12 and 13)

Golden Text: And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mk. 16: 15.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Acts 12:

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John whose surname was Mark.

Acts 13:

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain

sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The time was between 44 and 48 A. D.

Place: Antioch and Cyprus.

Persons: Paul and Barnabas, other disciples and teachers, Sergius Paulus, and Bar-jesus the sorcerer.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To set forth the ministry of Paul and Barnabas as the first foreign missionaries.

(2). To show the power of the Holy Spirit over sin and Satan, and the conversion of Sergius Paulus, Roman governor of Cyprus.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 12: 12; 13: 13; 15: 37.

T.—Ac. 11: 22-27; 15: 35; Rom. 16: 21.

W.—Rom. 10: 15; Gal. 1: 15; Eph. 3:

7, 8.

T.—I Tim. 2: 7; Heb. 5: 4.

F.—II Tim. 3: 8; Matt. 13: 38.

S.—Jon. 8: 44; I Jon. 3: 8.

S.—Ex. 9: 3; I Sam. 5: 6.

THE INTRODUCTION

We have in this lesson a study of the first foreign missionary work. The church at Antioch, being directed by the call of the Holy Spirit, set apart Paul and Barnabas as the first missionaries to go preach the Gospel to the Gentile world.

After having ordained them for this special work by fasting, by prayer and by the laying on of hands upon them, the church sent Paul and Barnabas forth to preach the Word wherever the Holy Spirit should direct them. Their first journey was to the island Cyprus off the coast of Syria in the Mediterranean Sea.

I. BARNABAS AND PAUL SENT FORTH AS THE FIRST FOREIGN MINISTERS

(Ac. 12: 25—13: 1-4a)

Barnabas and Paul, as we learned in last Sunday's lesson, went to Jerusalem with a contribution from the Antioch church for the sufferers in the Jerusalem

church. When they had fulfilled their mission there, they returned to Antioch, taking John Mark with them (Ac. 12: 25).

1. Prophets and Teachers at Antioch:

In the outset of this study, we are to note that there were in the Antioch church **prophets and teachers**; namely, Barnabas, Symeon, Lucius, Manaen the foster-brother of Herod, and Saul. These holy men were God's prophets and teachers who taught the people the principles of the Christian faith. They were men of special inspiration and power in preaching and teaching the Gospel of Christ to a lost people. Let us observe, the very first one mentioned here is Barnabas, the one about whose splendid accomplishments we have studied previously. Although we know very little of the work of Symeon, Lucius and Manaen, yet it is good to have their names given in the Antioch ministry as among the prophets and teachers of God's holy Word. They belong, as one writer has said, to "the faithful who are not famous." Of Lucius, however, Dr. William Smith says, "There can hardly be a doubt that he was one of 'the men of Cyrene' who, being 'scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen,' went to Antioch preaching the Lord Jesus, Acts 11: 19, 20."—**A Dictionary of the Bible**. It is to be considered, moreover, that while the church at Anti-

och was carrying forward its Christian worship mainly through these five faithful prophets and teachers, an advanced movement was being initiated by the Holy Spirit for two of the leading disciples of Christ.

2. Barnabas and Paul Set Apart for a Special Ministry:

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them, verse 2. Here is the case in which the Holy Spirit directed the church at Antioch to "Separate," to set apart Barnabas and Paul as two of its best men for a special work. Note, this call came as they—these prophets and teachers together with possibly the other followers of Christ at Antioch—were worshiping unto the Lord and fasting. They were at worship, let us believe in the Antioch church, when God spoke to them through his Holy Spirit. May we observe further that they were in a worshipful attitude to hear God's call, and to be willing to release Paul and Barnabas for the special work. This was a special call which came to Paul and Barnabas to do missionary work among the Gentiles. God needed the best men to do this special work among the heathen beyond the borders of Syria.

"If we would spend more time and strength in ministering to the Lord and in fasting, we would have more frequent and clearer leadings of the Spirit."—Dr. R. A. Torrey.

3. The Two-Fold Commission:

We have here the two-fold commission: the Holy Spirit called, and the Antioch church sent. Observe, When they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away, verse 3. "It was the Holy Spirit's call; it was man's work to recognize the call, and set the call apart for the

work."—Dr. R. A. Torrey. Remember, this call was for the work whereunto the Spirit called Barnabas and Paul. "So here, Simeon, and Lucius, and Manaen, faithful teachers at this time in the church of Antioch, when they fasted and prayed, laid their hands on Barnabas Saul, and sent them away (v. 3), according to the directions received."—Matthew Henry. This was the special ordination, setting them apart for a particular service in the gospel ministry. When good men are sent forth to accomplish a good work, they should be solemnly and particularly prayed for by their brethren who are their fellow-laborers and fellow-soldiers of the cross of Christ. Thus, these two brethren were given a special commission by the Antioch church, and discharged from their present work there to go, as the Holy Spirit should lead them, into fields of service among the Gentiles. Hence, the Antioch brethren prayed God's blessings upon them that he would give them success, and "that they might be filled with the Holy Spirit in their new work."

Let us note for example and for present-day thought, the Antioch church sent two of its very best men into the field whence God needed them most. What lessons may we draw from this? God needs today the best qualified men and women, both spiritually and otherwise, to teach and preach his Word to every race and nationality. The best qualified from Bible colleges and Seminaries are needed to take the gospel to the non-Christian lands, as well as to those people at home who are unbelievers and doubters of the reality of the saving power of Christ. Each local church should have not only the best minister possible to lead its people in the deep spiritual matters of life, but also the best fitted men and women spiritually and educationally as the teachers of the Sunday School classes. Each home should have Christian parents

in it to teach the gospel truths aright to their children. As God called Paul and Barnabas for a special work, just so churches and church institutions should select the best men and women at their disposal to do the best work for the cause of righteousness. This is no less true in business and educational channels, as well as it is in the religious realm. God wants the best.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Name some of the prophets and teachers at Antioch. Describe how Paul and Barnabas were set apart for a special work. How did they rank with other disciples at Antioch at that time? What type of men and women should be given the greatest work to do in carrying the gospel to others?

II. THE CONVERSION OF SERGIUS PAULUS (Ac. 13: 4b—12)

After the church at Antioch had fasted and prayed, and had laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas, the two men departed, going down the Orontes River to Seleucia the seaport of Antioch, and from thence they took ship for the island Cyprus. Thus, these two disciples, "being sent forth by the Holy Spirit," began the first foreign missionary work. One Bible commentator has said:

"Historically this is the precise moment at which the foreign missionary enterprise actually began. The fact that we are Christians ourselves, dates back to that obedience of those men in that little ship. They took the little tree of Christianity and transplanted it from the cramping flower-pot of Judaism into the soil of humanity of the whole world. It is an apparently tiny act which, in simple fact, when looked at down the perspective of the centuries, is seen to have **changed the history of the world.**"—**Basil Matthews.**

1. Paul and Barnabas Preached at Salamis:

Upon arriving at the seaport town of Salamis on the eastern part of Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas stayed a while and preached to the Jews in their synagogues. It is well to note here that John Mark went along with them on this missionary tour. After having spent some time in Salamis preaching the Word of God to the Jews, they traveled the length of the island, "through the isle," arriving at the town of Paphos on the west coast.

2. Sergius Paulus Desired to Hear the Word:

Sergius Paulus was the proconsul (Roman governor) of Cyprus, and a prudent man. Upon hearing of the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, he desired to hear the word of the Lord. He wanted to know what this new preaching meant—what mysterious teachings these strangers were bringing to the people of his town. Thus, he gave good proof that he was indeed "a man of understanding," and had a mind ready to hear the teachings from these men of the Word of God. He showed a willingness to learn just what these gospel ministers were preaching to the people. It bespeaks well, not only of rulers and men of high standing to be willing to hear the blessed Word of God expounded, but also of those of humble stations in life as well. But Satan very often places oppositions and fetters in the way of many, whether weak or strong, high or low, to divert their minds and hearts from hearing and receiving the Word of God. So it was at first in the case of Sergius Paulus.

3. Elymas Sought to Turn Aaway Sergius:

Elymas, who was with Sergius Paulus, sought to turn away the deputy from the faith. This Elymas was a sorcerer, a

magician or wizard. The New Standard Encyclopedia says, "He was a Jewish sorcerer and prophet who, . . . opposed Paul before the Proconsul Sergius Paulus at Paphos in Cyprus and was smitten with temporary blindness." Note here, Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, verse 9. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul turned to this vile sorcerer filled with Satanic spirits, and cried out to him, O full of all subtilty (guile) and all mischief (villany), thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right way of the Lord? Immediately Paul stopped this wicked man from his attempt to divert Sergius Paulus from the right way of the Lord. Yes, Paul gave him a scathing rebuke because of his guile and villany, as the child of the devil, to interfere with the preaching of the gospel. Moreover, he was instantly smitten with blindness. Yes, the power of God struck him mysteriously because of his Satanic interference with Paul and Sergius. For some time he went about seeking some to lead him. Those who oppose God stand in the way of their own light, and are stumbling in the darkness of this world. Why? They are blinded by their sins.

In that day, however, magicians of all kinds were favorably received among the Romans, and it was not anything unusual that this Elymas had gained influence with Sergius Paulus. Moreover, he knew that, if the proconsul should accept the Word of God upon Paul's preaching, he would lose his power over Sergius Paulus. For that reason he would lose much material advantage as well.

4. The Conversion of Sergius Paulus:

Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at

the doctrine (teaching) of the Lord, verse 12. He was astonished at what he saw, and he believed. Seeing God's power manifested so greatly as to smite Elymas blind instantly, and hearing the words of Paul, Sergius Paulus believed the truth of the Word of God as preached by Paul and Barnabas.

"In this miracle: When he saw what was done, and how much Paul's power transcended that of the magician, and how plainly Elymas was baffled and confounded, he believed."—Matthew Henry. It was a notable incident for the people of Paphos to witness, or to hear of the conversion of the proconsul, the governor of the island. One well known commentator has said:

"When he became a Christian, he neither laid down his government, nor was turned out of it, but we may suppose, as a Christian magistrate, by his influence helped very much to propagate Christianity in that island. The tradition of the Roman church, which has taken care to find bishoprics for all the eminent converts we read of in The Acts, has made this Sergius Paulus bishop of Narbon in France, left there by Paul in his journey to Spain."—M. H.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Where did Paul and Barnabas go from Antioch? Where did they preach while in Salamis? Who was Sergius Paulus and what did he do? Describe what took place when Elymas sought to prevent the proconsul from hearing the Word of God preached. Tell what Paul did to Elymas the sorcerer. Was Sergius Paulus converted at Paul's preaching?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Certain Judgments of the Lord Visited upon the Children of Wrath.—Ex. 9: 1-12; I Sam. 5: 1-9; Ac. 5: 1-11; Gen. 18: 23-33; 19: 13-29; II Kgs. 5:20-27.

Lesson Eleven for Sunday, June 15, 1941

Progress in World Missions

(Acts 13: 13—14: 28; Galatians 3: 23-29)

Golden Text: For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3: 26.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Acts 13:

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together, to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coast.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 3:

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The events of this lesson occurred sometime between 47 or 48 A. D.

Place: Antioch in Pisidia; also Iconium.

Persons: Paul and Barnabas.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To set forth the missionary labors of Paul and Barnabas while on their first foreign missionary journey in Cyprus and Asia Minor.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 16: 13; 17: 2; 18: 4.

T.—Ac. 10: 35; 12: 17; Ex. 6: 6.

W.—Deut. 7: 6, 7; Ps. 105: 23, 24.

T.—II Tim. 3: 11; Matt. 10: 14; Mk. 6: 11.

F.—Mk. 16: 20; Heb. 2: 4; Matt. 8: 10; 9: 28, 29.

S.—Ac. 8: 10; 28: 6.

S.—II Cor. 11: 25; Matt. 28: 19; Rom. 8: 17; II Tim. 2: 11, 12.

THE INTRODUCTION

Today's lesson deals with Paul and

Barnabas' northward journey from Paphos to Antioch in the district of Pisidia, thence to Iconium, the capital of Lycaonia, and on to Lystra and Derbe. The chief facts of this journey will be considered rather than a lengthy discussion given of the lesson text:

Paul and Barnabas sailed from Cyprus and landed on the southern coast of Asia Minor. From there they either covered the few miles to Perga in Pamphilia by land, or they continued to sail up the River Cestius to that city. About this time John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. But Paul and Barnabas went on further into the mountainous country, and finally reached Antioch in Pisidia.

Observe further, this lesson bears upon the account of Christianity first taken into a strictly pagan land by the two men whom the Holy Spirit had called out and the church at Antioch in Syria had sent forth as the first missionaries.

I. PAUL AND BARNABAS' LABORS IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA (Ac. 13: 13-52)

Although Paul and Barnabas, while on their way to Asia Minor, stopped at the ancient city of Perga in Pamphilia, then noted for its pagan temple worship of the goddess Diana, nothing at all is given in the scriptures as to whether or not they did any missionary work there. It is not known what length of time they stayed there. All that is said is "thither they came (v. 13), and thence they departed (v. 14)."

I. Paul's Sermon in the Synagogue at Antioch:

Upon leaving the city of Perga, they went on northward into the district of Pisidia, and entered the city of Antioch. On the sabbath they went into the synagogue (v. 14). Note here their custom of going into the Jewish synagogues on

the sabbath for worship. Even today travelers and tourists of the country should visit the house of God on the Lord's Day for worship. According to Matthew Henry, "Abundance of Jews lived there, and to them the gospel was to be first preached."

Now note, when the usual reading of the law and the prophets was done, as was always the custom of the Jews on the sabbath, the rulers of the synagogue sent one of their number to speak to Paul and Barnabas. The messenger said to them, **Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people,** say on, verse 15b. This was a fine reception; they called them **brethren**. It is probable that the rulers had met them shortly before, and had learned that they were God's messengers. It is well to give visiting servants of God an opportunity to speak in the name of the Lord. Thus, an invitation was extended to these two brethren to speak words of encouragement and exhortation to the congregation in the name of righteousness. Thereupon, Paul stood up and said, **Men of Israel, ye that fear God,** give audience, verse 16b. You who fear God and seek to keep his commandments may give ear to what I have to say. So, Paul, in his opening words of address, called attention that they might listen to his message. In this way he called attention to the people to heed what he had to say.

In substance, What was his message to them? It was the plain gospel truths which he related to them in broad outline. Paul told them that God had centuries before chosen the people of Israel and had exalted them; that when they were in bondage in Egypt for a long time, he with an **high arm** had brought them out; and that he had led them safely through the wanderings of the wilderness, and on into the Promised Land. He told them that God **gave unto them**

judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years. Following this period, said he, God gave them kings to rule over them, from Saul to David, who was "a man after God's own heart" (v. 22). Moreover, he told them, "After this man's seed (David) hath God, according, to his promise, raised unto Israel a Savior, verse 23. Paul was leading them, as was his purpose, to the heart of his message. Every gospel preacher should, in every message, seek to lead his hearers to the vital truths of his sermon.

Then Paul continued by relating the preaching of repentance of John the Baptist in the wilderness and down by the River of Jordan unto the children of Israel. He told them how John preached concerning the coming of this Savior, the only begotten Son of God, who is the Savior of men. He made it plain that John the Baptist was not the promised Messiah who had come, but that he was the Forerunner of the Christ, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose, verse 25b. Then Paul made his personal appeal to the people.

Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, . . . to you is the word of this salvation sent. To you God has sent his Son. To you this Savior has come to redeem sinful men. He is of the stock of David. His gospel message is for you. Yes, "the word of this salvation is sent to you." You who fear God give audience to these words. Paul's preaching to those people is the same gospel message which people today need to hear and accept. The word of this salvation is sent both to Jew and Gentile, bond and free alike. There is no difference; it is for all who will accept it. Ministers and teachers of the Word of God are to preach and to teach this message to lost souls.

But, said Paul, they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, condemned

this Savior, because they knew him not. Though they found no cause of death in him, yet they persuaded Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, to send him to the Cross of Calvary. Thus the Son of God was put to open shame and died on the cross. But, according to the scriptures, he arose from the dead. Therefore, he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption, verse 37. Be it known, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. This was Paul's crowning point in his message to them. It was a gospel message of forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Jesus on the cross.

2. Opposition to the Gospel:

As was true in other places where the Gospel of Christ had been preached, some of these Jews took offense and opposed Paul and Barnabas. But the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath, verse 42. Note, there were some who wanted to hear Paul preach these words on the next sabbath. The sowing of the seeds of the Gospel found lodgment in the hearts of some, nevertheless, at Antioch. Paul's preaching had so impressed itself upon the people that on the next sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God. During the intervening week-days, news must have circulated through the town of Paul's great sermon on the previous sabbath, for almost the whole city turned out to hear him. Either through idle curiosity, or great concern for hearing the Word, the multitude assembled to hear Paul and Barnabas.

But when the Jews saw the multitude gathered to hear Paul, they were filled with envy. Hence they raised their voices against Paul's preaching. They contradicted him and used blasphemous words against him. The Devil is ever ready to oppose the teachings of

Christ's Gospel wherever it is being preached. But zealous ministers of the Word will not yield to Satan's opposition. Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and told their opponents that It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, verse 64a. This gospel of Christ is to the Jew first, but, seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. Since you refuse the gospel of Christ, we will preach it to the Gentiles. Remember, the Lord hath said, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, verse 47b. Though you refuse, they will hear the word gladly (v. 48). As a result of their bold preaching, the scripture tells us that many believed.

Moreover, the Jews stirred up the chief men of the city, and honorable women, and persecuted Paul and Barnabas. They drove them out, expelled them out of their coasts.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Where did Paul and Barnabas go from Paphos? Have a member of the class to describe in brief Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch. What was the crowning point in his message? Describe the different attitudes which were taken by the Jews and the Gentiles.

II. THE CONCLUSION OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Ac. 14: 1-28)

Paul and Barnabas left Antioch and traveled down to Iconium, a city situated in the great tableland of Lyaconia. It was about eighty miles southeast of Antioch, and at the intersection of several important trade routes.

I. Their Labors in Iconium:

Paul and Barnabas labored in Iconium "a long time," probably for several months before going to the next city. Arnold's Practical Commentary tells us

that, "Here they had unusual success in preaching in the synagogue. They 'so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.' No doubt Paul's speech was in 'demonstration of the Spirit and power,' for as a rule it takes more than clever logic or forceful oratory to cause many people to turn to the Lord."

Let us observe, however, as in Antioch, so in Iconium the unbelieving Jews stirred up strife and bitter hatred, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren, verse 2b. But Paul and Barnabas remained for sometime in that city preaching the Word. As time passed strife and bitter opposition developed, while they continued to preach the gospel, unto many of the Jews and Gentiles together with their rulers, were about to make an assault upon Paul and Barnabas. Wherever God's word is carried to redeem and bless humanity, there are some who oppose it and ready to destroy its ministers' influence and power. Upon learning of the plot arranged by their opponents to stone them, Paul and Barnabas went to Lystra in Lyaconia, a city about eighteen miles southwest of Iconium.

2. Their Labors in Lystra:

Lystra was the home of young Timothy who became a convert during Paul's stay there. Paul performed a wonderful miracle in this town upon a man who had been a cripple all his life. He had never been able to walk. Becoming interested in what he had heard of Paul's preaching, he was taken to hear him preach. Paul, seeing that he had faith to be healed, called unto him, Stand upright on thy feet. The man immediately stood up and walked. The miracle had been instantly performed, and the people were greatly moved. They considered Paul and Barnabas as gods sent unto them in the likeness of men. They were so moved or excited

over the miraculous power demonstrated by Paul that they offered to give sacrifice, calling Barnabas Jupiter and Paul Mercury. But the apostles withstood them, saying, **Sirs why do ye these things? We are also men. We are not gods as you suppose. We are ministers of the gospel of Christ. We have come to preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities unto the living God,** verse 15b. It is he who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are therein. You are to turn to this gracious God and heed his wonderful Word. He will save you from your sins.

Certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium went to Lystra, where Paul and Barnabas were preaching, stirred up opposition, formed a plot, and stoned them, leaving Paul dead as they supposed. But he regained his strength and departed with Barnabas to Derbe. There they preached the gospel and taught many people. After having finished their stay there, they retraced their steps to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. In these towns they ordained elders in every church, praying with fasting and commended them to the Lord.

"Their purpose in retracing their steps was to encourage the converts to be true and to organize the churches by the appointment of elders. Thus there were constituted leaders who would feel a responsibility in the care of souls, and who had a degree of authority in the church."
—Arnold's Practical Commentary.

3. Their Experiences Related before the Church at Antioch:

Upon leaving the work which they had begun with the newly ordained elders in

the churches, Paul and Barnabas set out for the city of Perga, and from there they went to Attalia and took ship homeward to Antioch in Syria where they had first started on their missionary tour.

When they had come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles, verse 27. Paul and Barnabas, with great interest and concern for the newly planted work, told the church what they had been able to accomplish on this tour by the help of the Lord in the cities in which they had preached the gospel of Christ. Great rejoicing of the church at Antioch, let us believe, was shown by the Christians there over this good news from Paul and Barnabas. Thus the seeds of the gospel were planted in new soil during this first foreign missionary tour at Paphos, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and other places where the two apostles carried the message of salvation to lost souls.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the apostles' labors in Iconium. What difficulties did they encounter there? What did they accomplish in Lystra? What happened to Paul there? Why did the apostles ordain elders over the newly established churches in these towns before they returned home? What did they do when they returned to the church at Antioch in Syria?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus.—Gal. 3: 23-29; Ac. 2: 16; 13: 39; Rom. 10: 4; Heb. 9: 9, 10; Rom. 8: 14-16; I Jno. 3: 1, 2; I Cor. 12: 13; Eph. 2: 4; Col. 3: 11; Rom. 9: 7; Heb. 11: 18.

Lesson Twelve for Sunday, June 22, 1941

First Jerusalem Conference on World Missions (Acts 15; Galatians 2)

Golden Text: We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they. Ac. 15: 11.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

Acts 15:

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13 And after they had held their

peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his words, from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The council of Jerusalem occurred in A. D. 50. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians about A. D. 57.

Place: This lesson opens with the discussion occurring in the Church at Antioch in Syria. The great church council referred to here was held in Jerusalem. Paul's rebuke to Peter took place at Antioch. The Epistle to the Galatians was written at Corinth.

Persons: Paul and Barnabas, Peter and James, and other apostles assembled in the church council at Jerusalem.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To teach the truth of the scriptures that salvation is for Jew and Gentile alike, and that redemption is for all who will believe in Christ.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Jon. 7: 22; Gal. 2: 12; 5: 2; Col. 2: 8, 11, 16.

T.—Ac. 14: 27; Rom. 15: 24; I Cor. 16: 6, 11.

W.—Ac. 10: 20; 11: 12; 10: 44.

T.—Rom. 10: 11; I Cor. 1:2; I Pet. 1: 22.

F.—Eph. 2: 8; Tit. 2: 11; Ac. 12: 17.

S.—I Cor. 6: 9; 18: 8, 11; Gal. 5: 19.

S.—Eph. 5: 3; Col. 3: 5; I Pet. 4: 3.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson is about the first church conference on World Missions. This Jerusalem council had a great question to settle; namely, the question of requiring the Gentiles believers in Christ to be "circumcised after the custom of Moses" before being admitted as Christians in the church.

Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem from Antioch to sit with the other apostles, elders and brethren, and to discuss the great question. They had received Gentile converts, as had the apostle Peter done previously, without requiring their Gentile converts to be circumcised according to the Jewish custom. Hence, the question arose among the staunch Jews, and a council was called at the Jerusalem church to settle the matter.

I. DISSENSION IN THE
EARLY CHURCH

(Ac. 15: 1-6)

"Certain members" of the church in Jerusalem went, upon their own accord, to Antioch, and affirmed to the disciples there that the Gentiles must become Jewish proselytes; that is, be "circumcised after the custom of Moses" before they could become Christians, (verse 1). This affirmation was based upon the fact that no law had been passed to abolish this Jewish practice. Therefore, dissension arose among some of the apostles

when they had learned of Gentile converts being received as Christian believers into the church.

1. Paul and Barnabas Sent to Jerusalem:

The church at Antioch in Syria sent Paul and Barnabas to the church in Jerusalem to discuss with the apostles there the question of dissension. Since these two men had, not long before, returned to Antioch from their first foreign missionary journey, they were thought to be the proper ones to go to Jerusalem to discuss the matter. Remember, they had received Gentile believers in the newly established churches in Asia Minor before returning on their homeward trip. Moreover, Paul was well qualified to defend his position concerning the matter of receiving Gentile converts in Christendom. According to the scriptures and the command which Jesus gave Paul concerning taking the gospel to the Gentiles, they had good grounds for their position as ministers to the Gentile people. "There are times when it is wise to surrender a point for the sake of peace, but not when the heart of the gospel is at stake or when surrender would mean disaster to the church."—Arnold's Practical Commentary.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why were Paul and Barnabas selected as the two men to go to Jerusalem to discuss the question of "circumcism"?

II. THE DELIBERATIONS OF
THE COUNCIL

(Ac. 15: 7-21)

The apostles and elders were gathered together in a church council in Jerusalem to consider the matter.

1. The Discussion:

Paul and Barnabas were received in an honorable way by the church, and given the Christian right to relate what

had taken place in the early organized churches in Asia Minor. So, the multitude, those gathered to hear the discussions, hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul. It was not only an act of courtesy, but also their Christian duty to hear unbiasedly Paul and Barnabas concerning this vital question on church matters. When there are vital issues at stake, which arise in the affairs of Christianity, both sides should be wisely considered. God requires justice, and that is the best way to arrive at "the crux of the matter," and to reason out the best way to secure justice.

Paul rehearsed what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them, verse 12b. He told them how the Holy Spirit was with them in their ministry, and how they were guided by divine power to preach the Word to the Gentiles where they had gone. As a result, said he, "many turned to the faith."

"He just painted for them the picture of how Sergius Paulus in Cyprus, and the Greeks and Romans in the great cities of the plateau (of Asia Minor), had through their preaching about Christ, actually and truly received the Holy Spirit. There it was—a living, flaming fact that God had, through Christ, given his Spirit to uncircumcised foreigners. They might argue that the whole law of Moses was against it, but there stood the Fact which they could not gainsay. God was free to do what he would in his own world; and this was what he had done."—Basil Matthews.

The apostle Peter, after some discussion, rose up and said, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe, verse 7b. Peter was referring here to the time when he had gone down to Joppa. He related to them his vision on the housetop. He told them how Cornelius sent for him to come down

to his house, and how Cornelius had had a vision from God. He told them how that he preached Christ to those in Cornelius' house, and how Cornelius and other were saved that day. Said he to them, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him" (Ac. 10: 34). Remember, the apostle had previously justified his conduct concerning his preaching to the Gentiles to the brethren at Jerusalem. Accordingly, when they had heard the circumstances on that occasion, the brethren at Jerusalem glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Ac. 11: 18). Here Peter was rehearsing his own case of preaching to the Gentiles to substantiate the ground that God had directed him to preach to them. He felt the need of doing this in the defense of the argument for the reception of Gentile believers into the Christian church. The defenders of this argument proved that God had saved many Gentiles by his divine power.

The apostle James, the brother of Jesus, affirmed the fact that God had visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a peculiar people, for his name, verse 14b. He also made reference to the prophets concerning this matter. (See Amos 9: 11, 12). He further stated that those of the Gentiles who had turned to God should not be troubled. Moreover, he proposed that the council send a letter to them at Antioch, asking them only to abstain from four things; namely, (1) from eating food which has been polluted by first having been offered to idols; (2) from eating meat that has not been strained from its blood; (3) from things strangled and (4) from impurity, as fornication, etc. This was suggested because of the feeling of the Jews who were found in the various cities where the gospel was being car-

ried. Such agreement would help to make it easier for the Jews and Gentiles to live together harmoniously. This was good admonition which James gave to the church council. His speech had great bearing upon the assembled apostles, and was instrumental in leading them to agree to his proposal. Sound reasoning is always the best way to settle religious differences.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What was Paul's testimony concerning the question? What was Peter's speech concerning the matter? What did the apostle James propose for the council to do? What do you think of his suggestion?

III. WHAT THE COUNCIL DID (Ac. 15: 22-29)

The apostles and elders, with the whole church were pleased to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, verse 22a. Thus, the council agreed to follow the apostle James' advice by being willing to send letters to the church at Antioch. It was sent after this manner: The apostles and elders and brethren send greetings unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. The message which they sent was to assure them that the council had decided not to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, verse 28b. The things referred to in the letters were the same as have been mentioned in Topic Two above in this lesson. Hence, the question of circumcision was not required of them in the final decision of the council.

It is worthwhile to note here that the apostles, elders and the brethren in this church council at Jerusalem let the Holy Spirit guide in the very important question which they were to settle. They

reached their plausible decision through divine guidance and approval, let us believe, and were in one accord over the matter when they reached the conclusion. The scripture says, We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things. The council was considerate and generous in their decision and in sending some of their best men to tell by mouth the good news to the Gentile believers in Christ about this important question which concerned them. When God's way is agreeable and submissively followed by religious leaders, regardless as to race or color, the results will always be to the best advantage for the cause of Christ. Would it not be fine if church leaders today would come together on questions of difference and vital concern to the whole church, as did Paul and Barnabas, Peter and James, and other apostles in the Jerusalem Council, and settle agreeably upon the issues in hand? We believe it would. In fact, it would show the spirit of fairmindedness and brotherly love, at least, and show to the world that they wanted to do things in the name of righteousness.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What did the council finally decide to do? Have a member of the class to discuss the splendid spiritual teaching on this point. How should church leaders today settle questions of difference between them?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Great Doctrine of Justification by Faith.—Gal. 2: 1-21; Phil. 2: 16; I Thess. 3: 5; Ac. 15: 1, 24; II Cor. 11: 20, 26; Rom. 2: 11; II Cor. 12: 11; I Tim. 2: 7; II Tim. 1: 11; Rom. 5: 24; Eph. 5: 2; Tit. 2: 14; I Pet. 4: 2.

Lesson Thirteen for Sunday, June 29, 1941

Lessons from the Early Church

(I Cor. 3)

Golden Text: For other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 3: 11.

THE PRINTED TEXT*(Authorized Version)***I Corinthians 3:**

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: This epistle to the Corinthians was written probably between A. D. 57 and 59.

Place: The city of Corinth was located in Greece at the southern extremity of the narrow isthmus which joined the Peloponnesus to the mainland.

Persons: The apostle Paul and the Corinthian people to whom he directed the message of the epistle.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To present the application of two great truths concerning the church of Christ; (a) as to the problem of carnality, and (b) as to schism in the church at Corinth.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—I Cor. 2: 14, 15; Heb. 5: 13.
 T.—Jon. 16: 12; I Pet. 2: 2.
 W.—Rom. 12: 3, 6; II Cor. 3: 3.
 T.—II Cor. 12: 11; Ga. 6: 3.
 F.—Rom. 2: 6; Ga. 6: 4, 5; Rev. 22: 12.
 S.—Isa. 28: 16; Ma. 16: 18.
 S.—II Cor. 11: 4; Gal. 1: 7.

THE INTRODUCTION

About seven years after the notable church conference at Jerusalem, which we studied in last Sunday's lesson, the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the church at Corinth. In this lesson we have the study laid down of some undesirable conditions which existed in the church at Corinth at the time Paul wrote this letter to those people.

In the few verses given in this lesson from the third chapter of First Corinthians, we have some excellent truths set forth which Paul brought out both in his rebuke to the Corinthian church for their weak and corrupt condition, and in his exhortation to them to grow strong in the faith and work of the gospel. They were to build upon the foundation which he had laid for them.

I. PAUL'S REBUKE TO THE CORINTHIANS FOR THEIR IMMATURITY (I Cor. 3: 1-4)

The apostle Paul believed in Christian growth. He expected, when he planted a church among a people, the new converts to "grow in grace," and in loving favor with God and man. He had planted the church at Corinth with the view of looking forward to seeing a splendid growth of the Christian faith shown in that city as time passed. But he soon discovered, to his sorrow, that the people were still carnal-minded and divisions existed among them.

1. Still Babes in Christ:

In verses one and two, Paul tells these

Corinthian brethren that he had fed them with milk—"the sincere milk of the word"—had given them the plain and simple things of the gospel of Christ. He tells them that he had given them the vital truths, truths essential to a working knowledge of the saving power of Christ Jesus. At the time of their conversion; that is to say, when the church was established, Paul could not speak, as he states in the letter, unto them as unto spiritual, matured Christians, those who had attained spiritual growth; but as unto carnal, those under the power and dominion of the flesh. "The Greek word translated carnal means flesh."—Tarbell. At first they were fit only for elementary instruction; hence he had fed them on milk, as it were, and not on meat—the deeper things of the scriptures.

Matthew Henry says, "They were so far from forming their maxims and measures upon the ground of divine revelation, and entering into the spirit of the gospel, that it was but too evident they were much under the command of carnal and corrupt affections. They were still mere babes in Christ." It is true, they had received some of the principles of the Faith, but they had not grown up as mature Christians in that faith. Hence, their weaknesses were quite evident to Paul. It is the duty of ministers, Bible teachers and missionaries to teach and preach God's Word in such a manner as to enable the hearers, according to their capacities, to best understand the gospel message.

2. Their Guilt as to Carnality and Strife:

These Corinthian brethren were guilty of living carnal lives, and of stirring up strife and division among themselves. Paul did not hesitate to rebuke them for these sinful practices. He had sowed the seeds of righteousness among them, and he wanted fruitbearing and Christian growth to be manifested in their man-

ner of living. He desired them to go on in the faith, maturing more and more in the doctrine of Christ, and spreading the gospel among the people of the city. Any true planter of the Word, or zealous pioneer of the gospel, should greatly desire the evidence of fine fruits in his converts for the glory of God. Nothing less should be expected. But in the case of this church, Paul was greatly displeased with the way the members were living.

Moreover, these Corinthian brethren had engendered, stirred up among themselves quarrels, factions, emulations and strife on the account of the ministers, if for no other cause. Strife and contention had arisen among them over certain ministers, for Paul wrote to them, saying, **For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos,** verse 4a. He knew that such division and strife among the members over the preachers was sufficient proof of their being carnal; and that such fleshly interests and human affections, as some for one preacher and some for another, swayed them too much toward things temporal instead of strengthening them in spiritual matters. Quarrels and contentions concerning religious matters serve always to hinder rather than to foster spiritual growth in any church; but peaceful religious practices and growth in the faith tend to develop mature Christians. On the other hand, religious factions and quarrels are prompted by individual pride and personal whims, not by the rules of brotherly love and Christian principles. The scriptures teach that strife and division serve to disrupt good Christian morals. Bible teachers and ministers should not fail to stress this great truth which Paul brought to the Corinthian brethren.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Paul rebuke the Corinthian brethren? What were their sins? What had they fail-

ed to do? What is meant by the expression "babes in Christ"? What is the duty of ministers and Bible teachers today concerning the teaching and stressing the things for which Paul rebuked the Corinthians?

II. FOLLOWERS OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST JESUS (I Cor. 3: 5-11)

1. Paul and Apollos Ministers:

Let us observe here that Paul emphasized the fact that he and Apollos were but ministers of the gospel. It was through their ministry of the Word that these Corinthian brethren had believed in Christ Jesus. He wrote them that he had planted the seeds of the gospel, and that Apollos had watered; that is, he had gone among them to further the cause of righteousness, (v. 6). They were not the authors of the Christian religion, though they were sent to preach it for the conversion of lost souls. Their spiritual gifts and powers which they exerted in the ministry were from God who gave the increase. Hence, **neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase,** verse 7. Ministers of the gospel are only men, and Christian believers should not deify them, nor seek to put them in the place of God. They can do nothing of great religious value in the kingdom work unless God is with them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Oneness of True Ministers:

Paul, furthermore, said, **He that planteth and he that watereth are one,** verse 8a. The faithful pioneer of the gospel; that is, the minister who goes forth to establish new churches in new places, and the minister who waters, nourishes the planted Word that it may become more fruitful, are employed by the same Master. There is no difference.

The oneness in the ministry is a vital

factor which servants of the Lord would do well to attain. "All the faithful ministers of Christ are one in the great business and intention of their ministry. They have differences in sentiment in minor things; they may have their debates and contests; but they heartily concur in the great design of honouring God and saving souls, by promoting true Christianity in the world."—M. Henry. Paul said, **We are laborers together with God.** We are his servants of the gospel. He told those people that he had laid the foundation, and **another buildeth thereon.** Every man shall receive his reward in accordance with his own labors. The planter of the Word will be rewarded justly by the Holy One. It behooves, therefore, all ministers, Bible teachers and missionaries of the Word to render most valuable services in the name of Christ. Paul desired to impress upon the Corinthian church the fact that oneness in the Christian faith was greatly needed among them, and that the heavenly reward was certain for those who labored not in vain.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Paul emphasize the fact that he and Apollos were simply ministers of the gospel? Have a member of the class to discuss the "oneness of true ministers." What should be the aim of all servants of God?

III. TWO KINDS OF MINISTRY AND THE RESULTS (I Cor. 3: 12-15)

Paul said, **Every man's work shall be made manifest,** verse 13a. God knows man's own thoughts and deeds, and he shall judge them according to their value. If his works are good and holy, then his reward will be heavenly; but, if he builds upon wood, hay and stubble, his recompense will be only temporal. The person who ministers to the flesh, the material things of this life only, he is not assured of the heavenly blessings in the life to come. One ministry is of

the flesh, while the other is of the spirit and of spiritual things. Paul emphasized the distinction between the two types of ministry.

1. The Passing Reward:

Christ, the chief corner stone, is the sure foundation (Eph. 2: 20). Paul reasoned with the Corinthian brethren that **other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,** verse 11a. Christ is the foundation, the way of eternal life. But some people prefer to build upon the foundation of wood, hay and stubble, thus centering their interests upon worldly things. They become servants of the gods of mammon. Such people center not their thoughts upon Christ and his goodness, but upon the things of this earth. Accordingly, the work and achievements of such people will, according to Paul's teachings here, perish, and they shall suffer loss. In the day of the Lord they shall find themselves without the true reward. They will be like the rich man Dives.

2. The Sure Reward:

There are those, on the other hand, who build upon the foundation of **precious stones** (v. 12). They will, because of their faithfulness and loyalty to the cause of Christ, receive their proper reward. All true followers of righteousness are building upon the **sure foundation** which will not pass away. Paul stressed the importance of one building upon this sure foundation.

"Paul says, 'if a man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.' Doubtless the reward to which Paul refers is the one he will receive in the day of judgment."—**Arnold's Practical Commentary.** This heavenly reward will climax all other rewards and it will last forever. All earthly gain and favor will vanish into nothingness when compared to the glories of the heavenly state. Be

it understood, lay workers, as well as ministers, evangelists and missionaries in foreign fields, can be assured of a just reward, however small or great their spiritual labors may have been in the kingdom of God. It behooves, therefore, every Sunday School teacher, and every Sunday School student to exercise his or her talents in performing faithful service unto the Lord.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Discuss the difference between the ministry to the

flesh and the ministry to the spirit. How do the rewards differ for those who minister to the flesh and those who minister to the spirit? What should be the attitude of all Christian followers concerning these two ministeries?

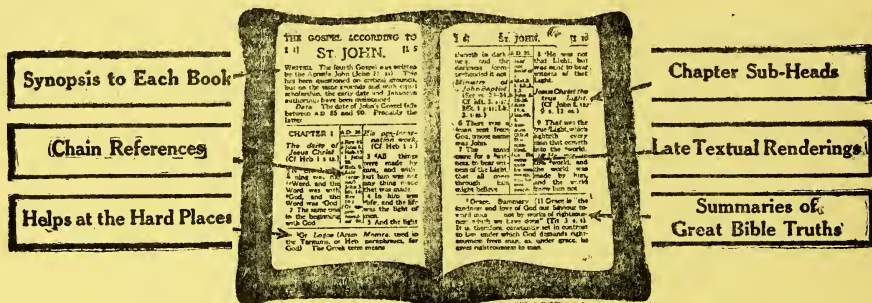
FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
The Lord the Supreme Judge.—I Cor. 4: 1-8; Job 9: 2; Prob. 21: 2; Rom. 4: 2; II Cor. 5: 10; Rev. 20: 12; I Cor. 1: 12; 3: 4, 21; Rom. 12: 3; Jam. 1: 17; I Pet. 4: 10.

Helps on Pages Where Needed

The Scofield Reference Bible

Edited by REV. C. I. SCOFIELD, D.D.

Compare your Bibles with it. See if any of them have these helpful features: Chain-references of great Bible doctrines—Summaries of great Bible truths—Synopsis to each book of the Bible—Prophecies harmonized—Apparent contradictions reconciled—Revised marginal references—Bible types explained—The greater covenants analyzed.



HANDY SIZE EDITION

Specimen of Type

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

Size 7x4½ inches and only 1½ inches in thickness.

LARGE TYPE EDITION

Specimen of Type

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

Size 8½x5½ inches and only 1½ inches in thickness.

NOTE—All have overlapping covers, round corners, and red under gold edges, except as noted.

No. 40. Fine Grain Cloth, round corners, red edges. \$1.95

No. 53. French Morocco Leather \$5.50

"Oxford India Paper" Edition

Fits the Pocket

Size 7x4½ inches and only 1 inch thick.

No. 53x. French Morocco Leather \$7.00

No. 55x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed \$8.00

No. 59x. Persian Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed \$9.00

With Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names, Subject, Index, Concordance and Maps. (1½ inches thick.)

No. 153. French Morocco Leather, (white paper edition, 1½ inches thick) \$6.50

No. 155x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed \$9.50

No. 165x. Real Morocco Leather, calf lined to edge, silk sewed \$12.00

No. 90. Fine Grain Cloth, round corners, red edges. \$2.75

No. 73. French Morocco Leather \$6.50

"Oxford India Paper" Edition

Size 8½x5½ inches and only 1 inch thick.

No. 73x. French Morocco Leather \$9.00

No. 75x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed \$10.00

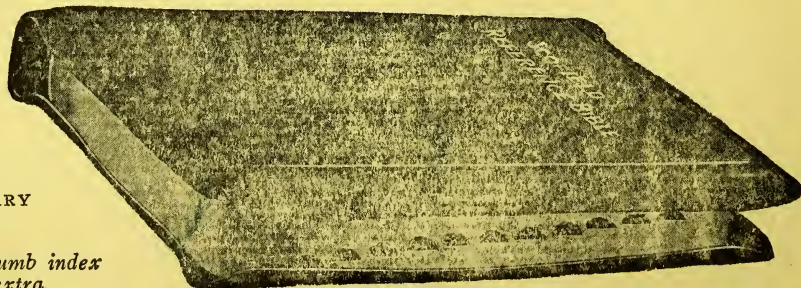
No. 79x. Persian Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed \$11.50

With Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names, Subject, Index, Concordance and Maps. (1½ inches thick.)

No. 173. French Morocco Leather, (white paper edition, 1½ inches thick) \$7.50

No. 175x. French Morocco Leather, leather lined to edge, silk sewed \$11.50

No. 185x. Real Morocco Leather, calf lined to edge, silk sewed \$14.75



A
BIBLE
AND A
COMMENTARY
COMBINED

Improved thumb index
at 50c extra.

Cp 286.2

The Advanced Quarterly

For Use By

ADULT

and

YOUNG

PEOPLE'S

Classes



PUBLISHED BY
Free Will Baptist Press
AYDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

THE ADVANCED QUARTERLY

for

Young People and Adults

REV. R. B. SPENCER ----- *Editor-Writer*

Volume II

Third Quarter, 1941

Number 2-
3

July-August-September

C O N T E N T S

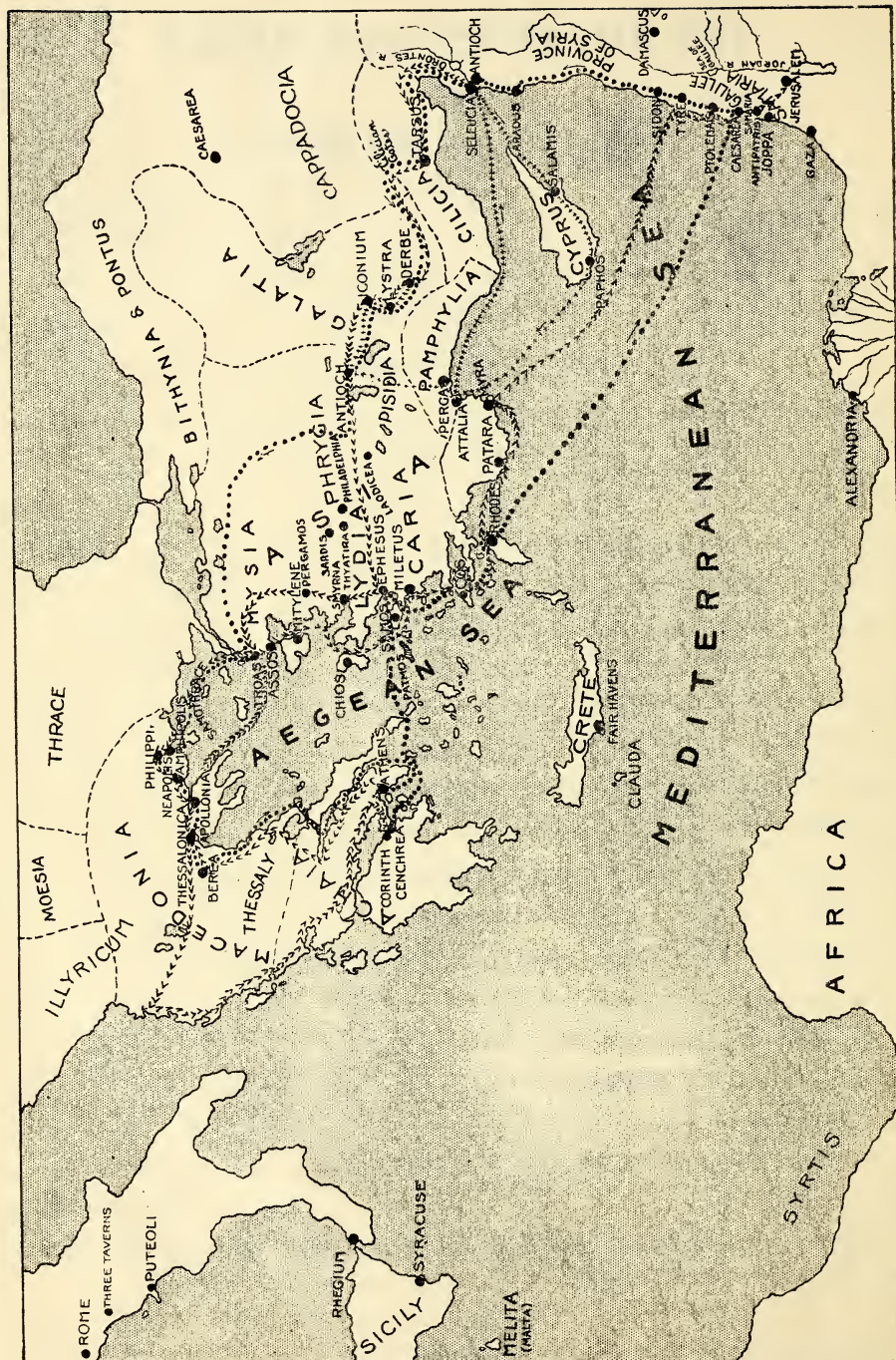
	Page
1. July 6: The Gospel Is Taken into Europe -----	3
2. July 13: Christianity Expands in Asia -----	7
3. July 20: The Responsibility of the Church Regarding Beverage Alcohol -----	12
4. July 27: The Holy Spirit Inspires New Testament Letters -----	17
5. August 3: Paul Preaches Faith in Christ -----	22
6. August 10: James Teaches Consistent Christian Living -----	26
7. August 17: Peter Encourages Suffering Christians -----	31
8. August 24: The Writer of Hebrews Explains the New Covenant -----	37
9. August 31: John Urges Christian Love -----	41
10. September 7: Revelation: A Message to Persecuted Churches -----	46
11. September 14: The Eternal God, the Source of Help -----	51
12. September 21: Overcoming the Adversary -----	55
13. September 28: The Fulfilment of History: The New Jerusalem -----	59

Published Quarterly by the Free Will Baptist Press, Ayden, North Carolina

PRICE 8c PER COPY

32c PER YEAR

Entered as second-class mater at the Post Office, Ayden, North Carolina
under the Act of March 3, 1879.



Lesson One for Sunday, July 6, 1941

The Gospel Is Taken into Europe

(Acts 15: 36 to 18: 21)

Golden Text: Come over into Macedonia and help us. Ac. 16: 9b.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

ACTS 16:

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 And they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we

came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: Paul's Second Missionary journey covered about three years; namely, either from A. D. 50 to 53, or from 51 to 54.

Places: Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece.

Persons: Paul and Silas, Lydia and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To trace Paul's Second Missionary journey as far as Philippi in Europe, and to discuss his labors in that city.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Matt. 28: 18-20.

T.—II Cor. 2: 12, 13; II Tim. 4: 13.

W.—Ac. 19: 25.

T.—16: 16-18.

F.—Ac. 16: 19-24.

S.—Ac. 16: 25-34.

S.—Ac. 22: 25.

Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas went back to Antioch in Syria. They remained there for some time. Paul's missionary zeal, however, began to urge him to go forward again into the foreign field. He proposed to Barnabas for them to revisit the cities in Asia Minor in which they had planted the gospel on their first missionary journey.

THE INTRODUCTION

Upon leaving the Church Council in

When Barnabas suggested for them to take John Mark with them, Paul object-

ed upon the grounds that Mark had deserted them on their first tour. But Barnabas insisted and the two agreed to separate. Paul chose Silas to go with him northward through Syria, and then westward to Tarsus in Cilicia, while Barnabas chose John Mark to go with him southwestward to Cyprus. At this point we leave Barnabas and Mark, since they have no further part in this lesson.

Paul and Silas continued on their journey from Tarsus across the Taurus mountains, went through the pass called the "Cilician Gates," and on to Derbe, then to Lystra. Paul chose Timothy at Lystra to join company with them. Upon leaving Lystra Paul and his company continued on their way westward, journeying through south Galatia until they reached Troas on the coast of the Aegean Sea. It was there that the vision from God appeared to Paul. The discussion of this lesson begins at this point with Paul's labors at Philippi in Europe.

I. PAUL HEEDING THE CALL OF THE WEST (Ac. 16: 8-10)

While on this trip through Asia Minor, Paul's work consisted mainly in confirming the churches which he and Barnabas had already established on their first journey, (Acts 15: 41). It is not known whether Paul established any new churches in Asia Minor, at this time, unless it was at the town of Troas on the coast.

I. "Forbidden by the Holy Spirit":

Upon visiting the formerly established churches in Asia Minor on this tour, Paul had in mind, doubtless, the establishment of new churches in new places, but God had for him a different plan on this journey, for he was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia Minor, verse 6b. God's plan far surpassed anything which Paul might have had in his mind when he set out on this tour, because it was not the

heavenly Father's will that he should stop to establish new churches in the provinces of Asia at this time. God meant for him to press on with the gospel message into Europe. In this connection, Chrysostom says, "Wherefore they were forbidden he does not say, but they were forbidden he does say—teaching us to obey and not ask questions."

2. The Vision:

While the little company was in the city of Troas, A vision appeared to Paul in the night. It was God's call to him to heed this divine vision. It was represented to him, in the night, as a man of Macedonia standing before him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us, verse 9b. Note, the call to Paul, who was God's chosen vessel to the Gentiles, was for help. A grave human need existed there. This was a call for the gospel to be preached unto the people in Macedonia, a district lying north of Greece. It was a call for spiritual enlightenment to be given to the people of Europe without delay.

Remember, moreover, Paul did not question the source or wisdom of this call: but, immediately, without delay or hesitancy, endeavored to go into Macedonia. He was ready to obey God's will by taking the gospel into the region across the Aegean Sea to the people in Europe. Where the Holy Spirit led he followed. "This decision of Paul was, in very truth, a turning point in the history of the world. It challenged for the first time the whole of western civilization with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we cannot picture what would have been the consequences had they not gone."—Tarbell's Teachers' Guide.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Paul and Silas not stop to establish new churches on this second journey in Asia Minor? What was God's plan for them when they had gone to Troas? Discuss

the vision and its purpose which appeared to Paul. What was Paul's attitude toward this call from Macedonia? What should be the attitude today of Christian workers when God calls them for a special work?

II. PAUL TAKES THE GOSPEL INTO EUROPE (Ac. 16: 11-15)

Paul and his fellow travelers took ship from Troas to the island of Samothracia, from thence to Neapolis in Macedonia, and on to Philippi, an important city of that country. When he had reached Philippi, his first object was to find a point of religious contact with some of the people of the city.

I. Place of Prayer:

Upon learning that some women were gathered for prayer by a river side on the sabbath, Paul and his companions went there and sat down with them, (v. 13). Surely it must have been a source of joy to them when they found a few people who were in the act of worshipping the true and living God in that pagan city. Observe, it was on the sabbath and down by the river side where Paul found the women that were come together. As a means of revealing some light on this point, we quote from R. B. Rackham the following statements: "Josephus quotes a decree of Halicarnassus allowing the Jews to make their prayers on the seashore according to the custom of their fathers; and two hundred years after Christ Tertullian still mentions *orationes litorales* (prayers on the shore) as a characteristic of the Jews." That group of women must have welcomed Paul and his little company, for in verse 13 we learn that he spoke to the women assembled by the river. It was his custom to seek worshipers of God wherever he went.

"Thither Paul and Silas and Luke went, and sat down, to instruct the con-

gregation, that they might the better pray with them. They spoke unto the women who resorted thither, encouraging them in practicing according to the light they had, led them on further to the knowledge of Christ."—Matthew Henry.

It does not appear that there was a synagogue of the Jews in that city to serve as a door of entrance to Paul to preach to the people. However, a meeting place down by the river, out of the city, was set apart for the coming together of the women, where prayer was wont to be made. There in the open air and in the midst of nature was the place where prayer was, by custom, to be made by the small group of women of that pagan town. The apostle Paul found this place of worship and those that gathered there for prayer on the sabbath. He spoke to them the gospel message, may we believe, that they might obtain a clearer understanding of God's holy Word. It is worthy of note here, whether there be established holy places of worship or not in city or country side, true worship to the living God can be entered into by true worshippers out in the open and in the midst of God's creation. Outdoor meetings have often proved a great success in winning lost souls for Christ.

2. The Conversion of Lydia:

Who was Lydia? She was a native of Thyatira, a city which was noted for its dyeing industry and was located in Asia Minor. She had an honest calling—a seller of purple. Lydia was either married at Philippi, or she had settled there because of her trade in the dyeing industry. She was a seller of purple either of dye, or of purple cloth or silk. "Thyatira, like the Lydian land in general, was famous for its dyeing; and its guild of dyers is known from the inscriptions. Lydia sold the purple-dyed garments from Thyatira in Philippi; and she had, no doubt, a regular connection

with a firm in her native city, whose agent she was."—**Tarbell's Teachers' Guide.**

Lydia was one **that worshipped God**, verse 14b. She worshipped the Lord according to the knowledge which she had of God's holy Word. She was one of the devout women who went down by the river side for prayer on the sabbath. As Paul delivered his gospel message to the little group of women at the hour of prayer, the Lord opened her heart to give heed unto the things which Paul spoke unto them. Note, God was working in her heart, and she believed the good news which Paul preached concerning Christ and his mission on earth. Matthew Henry says, "It is not enough to be worshippers of God, but we must be believers in Jesus Christ." Lydia was willing to look for further light in the scriptures that she might discover greater and deeper things of God's will toward mankind. As a consequence, note what work was wrought upon her. She was one **whose heart the Lord opened**. She was led to see through Paul's preaching the truth of the gospel. The Lord was the author of this new light which came to her heart, and she believed in the Son of God as the Saviour of her soul. Accordingly, she became a convert to the Christian faith and was baptized. Moreover, Lydia's conversion did not stop there, for it had its effect upon others. Her household believed in the word which Paul preached unto them, and they were baptized. Thus, through Paul's effective preaching in the name of Jesus and directed by the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel was received in the beginning at Philippi. The Lord has said that his word shall not return unto him void, (Isa. 55: 11), and here, as in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and other places where Paul had preached before, the gospel message took root and souls were saved.

3. Lydia's Hospitality:

After she and her household became Christians, Lydia invited the apostles to come into her home and abide there. She said to Paul, **If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there**, verse 15b. If you consider me and my household to be true converts of the Lord Jesus Christ, come into my home, and make it your home while you are here in our city. You are perfectly welcome to have lodging and entertainment with us. Come in and abide with us while you are preaching the word of the Lord in our town. Note, she constrained them to make her home their abiding place. This was showing a kindly spirit which Lydia readily manifested to Paul and his little company of the Lord's followers. She was, doubtless, a woman of some means, being in the business of selling purple-dyed garments, and was well able, let us believe, to give entertainment in a splendid manner to God's holy messengers. True Christians should be willing to care for the Lord's servants while they do Christian service in their midst. It is striking to note here how Lydia set a fine example of true hospitality in that pagan city to the little group of strangers who had gone to labor in Philippi in the name of Jesus for the salvation of lost souls.

In reference to Lydia and her household becoming the first converts at Philippi, Arnold's Practical Commentary says: "Lydia and her household, and no doubt others in this group, became the nucleus of a church. It was a church which ever afterward held Paul in high esteem, and which sent him presents on various occasions. The remarkable episode of the imprisonment of Paul and Silas, and of the conversion of the jailor was at the close of their stay."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Where did Paul go from Troas? Where did he first

go in Philippi for worship? Why was prayer made "by the river side"? Tell of Lydia's conversion. In what way did she show her hospitality to Paul and his company? How should Christians treat visiting messengers of God while they are laboring for the kingdom in their midst?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
A Deamon Cast out, Paul and Silas Beaten and the Philippian Jailer Converted.—Ac. 16: 16-40; II Cor. 6: 5; I Kg. 18: 17; II Cor. 11: 23, 25; I Thess. 2: 2; Ac. 12: 7, 10; Ac. 2: 37; 9: 6; I Jon. 5: 10; 22: 25.

Lesson Two for Sunday, July 13, 1941

Christianity Expands in Asia

(Acts 19: 1 to 21: 17)

Golden Text: So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Ac. 19: 20.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

ACTS 19:

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing, and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost through-

out all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and, having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: Paul's labors occurred in Ephesus probably from the fall of 54 to the spring of 57 A. D.

Place: His work, as discussed in this lesson, was chiefly in Ephesus.

Persons: Paul, the disciples in Ephesus, Demetrius and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To give the work of Paul at Ephesus in the face of bitter opposition of the Jews of the synagogue, and of the silversmiths and devotees of the goddess Diana.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 17: 2; 18: 4; 28: 23.

T.—Ac. 9: 2; II Tim. 1: 15; II Pet. 2: 2.

W.—II Cor. 1: 8; Ac. 16: 16, 19.

T.—Ps. 115: 4; Isa. 44: 10-20.

F.—Jer. 10: 3; Ac. 20: 4; 27: 2.

S.—Rom. 16: 23; I Cor. 1: 14.

S.—Col. 4: 10.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with Paul's third missionary journey, and in a special way with his labors at Ephesus. It may be well to note here that there was a long break between last Sunday's lesson and this one in the history of Paul's missionary labors. The discussion of this lesson is confined to the printed text.

On his second tour, let us note, Paul labored chiefly at Philippi, Thessalonica and Beroea in Macedonia, and also at Athens and Corinth in Greece. Upon leaving Greece he sailed across the Aegean Sea eastward to Ephesus in Asia, but did not stay there long as he had planned to return to Jerusalem in time to be with the brethren there during the Passover season. He promised, however, to return to Ephesus, if God so will, after going to Jerusalem to observe the Passover feast, and to report the results of his labors at Philippi and other places in Europe.

Upon setting out on his third journey, Paul went from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria, and after spending some time there, he set out for Asia where he had formerly traveled preaching the gospel. He passed through Tarsus and the "Cilician Gates," and on to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia, revisiting the brethren in those places. As some have it, he "established all the

disciples," and continued on westward to Ephesus. He remained there, preaching boldly the gospel of Christ, for a period of at least two years and three winters. This lesson deals especially with Paul's labors in that pagan city.

I. PAUL'S LABORS AT EPHEBUS
(Ac. 19: 8-10)

1. Paul in the Synagogue:

Paul went into the synagogue at Ephesus on the sabbath, as was his custom upon visiting other places where the Jews had synagogues, and he spoke to the people. This was the custom of Jesus during his earthly ministry. Paul sought to be about his Father's business on the sabbath day wherever he went, and was ever ready to do all the good possible in the name of Christ. He always had a testimony to give both to Jew and Gentile wherever the Spirit called him to preach the gospel. Thus, the synagogue was a good place to deliver his message of salvation, for the people, who had assembled on the sabbath to worship God, would be in a mode to listen, if not accept, to the new doctrine which he had to proclaim. In this way Paul had an audience to hear his message. While Paul preached, at times out in the open to gathered groups of people, the synagogue was the more suitable place for expounding the scriptures. Buildings dedicated to the Lord are usually more conducive to real worship and the messenger has a greater opportunity for impressing upon the audience the Word of God.

2. What Paul Preached:

Paul confined his preaching to the kingdom of God. He preached boldly and courageously, for the period of three

months in the synagogue, concerning Christ and his kingdom. He emphasized the gospel truth as it is revealed in the teaching of Christ Jesus. He pointed out to the Jews their mistake in looking for the Messiah to come, when he had already come. Paul used persuasion; he exhorted; he reasoned and he disputed with the Jewish leaders concerning the gospel truths which Christ had taught while on earth. He always gave scriptural proofs for his arguments. He was conscientious, bold and resolute in his honest purpose to bear the gospel message to lost souls. Thus, filled with the Spirit of God, Paul did not falter, but rather proclaimed, with a burning zeal, the message of redemption. Through the shed blood of Christ on the cross, Paul assured his hearers, was the only way sinners could be saved. The result was some believed while others opposed Paul's message of salvation.

3. Opposition to Paul:

During the space of three months, Paul preached and reasoned with the Jews, giving scripture as proof for his stand on the doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ. This was sufficient time, it would seem, to allow the people to consider well the message of love which Christ had called Paul to proclaim to a lost world. But, while some believed Paul's preaching, there were others who bitterly opposed him.

Divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way (the way) before the multitude, verse 9a. A great many of the Jews hardened their hearts; that is, grew stubborn and disobedient against Paul's words. Moreover, they spoke evil of him, of all in "that way" before the multitude, thus seeking to arouse the people in general against his preaching. Yes, these opposers spoke evil of "that way," alluding to those who were proclaiming the doctrine of Christ. They did this in

derision and in a manner to scorn the disciples of Christ for the new doctrine which they were preaching. Such opponents of the doctrine of redemption, as preached by Paul, were corrupt agents in the hands of Satan, working to hinder the progress of the cause of Christ in Ephesus. Even in this age there are non-believers and bitter opponents of the gospel of Christ who are ever active and influential in many places in spreading false views and corrupt propaganda to hinder the work of the Christian faith. They are following the gods of this world. But Paul did not allow himself to give up; he continued on preaching the gospel in that city until a definite work was established there in the name of Christ.

4. Paul Turns to the School of Tyrannus:

Seeing that the Jews were bitter against him, Paul departed from them after a period of three months' preaching in their synagogue, and he separated the disciples by taking them with him to save them from that "untoward generation." He went into a certain school at Ephesus, known as "the school of one Tyrannus." In this place Paul was able to go on with his preaching and lecturing with more freedom. Whether this was a divinity-school of the Jews, or a school of philosophy of the Gentiles, belonging to one Tyrannus, as some believe, we do not know; however, it was a convenient place in which Paul and the disciples had been given the privilege to expound the word of God to the people. While Paul preached and reasoned in the synagogue only on the sabbath day, here in the school of Tyrannus he preached and lectured daily unto the people on the word of God. Here both Jew and Gentile attended his discourses daily, deriving therefrom new knowledge of the scriptures.

Paul preached and lectured there in

that school, discoursing upon the true way of salvation, for a period of two years. May it be said, he "redeemed the time," and sowed the seeds of the gospel in Ephesus so that a great work in the name of Christ was established there. In verse ten we read, **All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.** Matthew Henry has given the following explanation of this verse:

"All those that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus; not only all that dwelt in Ephesus, but all that dwelt in that large province called Asia, of which Ephesus was the head city—Asia the Less it was called. There was great resort to Ephesus from all parts of the country, for law, traffic, religion, and education, which gave Paul an opportunity of sending the report of the gospel to all the towns and villages of that country."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Where did Paul first preach in Ephesus? What was the nature of Paul's preaching in the synagogues to the Jews? Upon what basis did the Jews raise opposition to Paul? Discuss Paul's work in the school of Tyrannus. What happened here which aroused sentiment against Paul?

II. THE UPROAR OF THE SILVERSMITHS AGAINST PAUL

(Ac. 19: 23-32)

1. The Opposition of Demetrius:

Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus who made silver shrines for Diana. These silver shrines were medals, so some think, stamped with the effigies, images or representations of the goddess Diana, or of her temple, or of both. There are others who believe they were representations of the temple in miniature form, of course, containing the image of Diana. They were of silver and small enough to be carried about on

one's person, "as the papists do their crucifixes."

It is understood that worshippers from afar, upon going to Ephesus to pay their devotions at the temple of Diana, would purchase these little temples or shrines to take back home with them for the gratification of their friends, and to preserve in their own minds the idea of the stately temple of Diana.

Paul had been preaching against such things in Ephesus, and had declared that **there be no gods which are made with hands**, verse 26b. He had put the people to thinking concerning those things. He had caused many, moreover, to turn away from the business of buying and selling these little silver shrines. Such business was the work of Satan, and those who assembled from far and near to worship at the temple of the goddess Diana, and who bought these miniature shrines were simply idolatrous worshippers. Accordingly, Paul, being led by the Spirit of God, did not hesitate to denounce such heathen practices. The silversmith Demetrius, being greatly incensed at Paul's preaching against his business, called together the craftsmen, and the workmen of like occupations. He denounced Paul before them for persuading and turning away a great many people, their best customers from their business. He told them that their craft was in much danger to be set at naught (v. 27), and that the temple of the great goddess Diana would be despised if Paul were permitted to continue his attack against their business. The result was a great uproar among these craftsmen. Satan picked out Demetrius as leader to stir up strife against God's "chosen vessel" who was preaching the gospel of Christ to the heathen worshippers. But Paul did not slacken his attack upon such idolatrous worship.

2. The Uproar of the Mob:

When they heard these sayings, they

were full of wrath, verse 28a. These craftsmen were aroused to indignation and fury when they were told that their trade was in danger because of Paul's stirring up the people. Even today when individuals, who are engaged in a business contrary to good morals and the principles of Christianity, are censured by the religious forces, they readily resent it and become indignant. Accordingly, such opposition of these silversmiths was inspired by selfishness and commercialistic considerations. These craftsmen, who were making their living from the manufacture and sale of silver shrines of Diana, bitterly objected to Paul's preaching against their trade. It is a known fact that the Devil does not want the teachings of Christ to take root and supplant his business of evil deeds as are carried on among his wicked followers. He puts up a fight wherever Christian works enter in to teach the people the right way.

Note again, these craftsmen exclaimed, **Great is Diana of the Ephesians.** She is our goddess, and we are going to stand by her. We are going to continue our devotions to her and will worship in her temple. Why should she be despised, and why should her magnificence be destroyed, when all Asia and the world worshipeth her? The cry went forth until, **The whole city was full of confusion,** verse 29a. All reason seemed to have been dethroned among many of the people. The incensed silversmiths had purposely instigated a riot among the people, so much so that **Some cried one thing and some another.** The crowd was confused. The greater part did not know why they had come together. The whole affair was brought about by Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen who had stirred up the mob in the city. This strife and confusion was centered against Paul and his fellow disciples. Although Paul was the chief speaker among them, the mob considered his followers as hav-

ing exercised a similar influence against their devotions to Diana.

3. Gaius and Aristarchus Cast into the Theater:

The mob caught Gaius and Aristarchus, and thrust them into the theater, (v. 29). Some Bible scholars believe this was done with the design to make them fight with the beasts, or to abuse them severely as they were companions of Paul. Remember, Paul said that he had fought with beasts at Ephesus, (I Cor. 15: 32). Gaius was of Derbe and Aristarchus was from Thessalonica (Ac. 20: 4). Upon learning what had happened to these two companions, Paul made attempt to go into the theater among the people, but **the disciples suffered him not,** verse 30. Thus, it is certain that there were other friends there who intervened to prevent him from throwing himself into the mouth of danger. Paul was ready, however, to stand by Gaius and Aristarchus, though it should cost him his life. But Paul's friends considered it a very hazardous thing for him to go into the theater, because riotous men rarely ever control their acts by common sense or good reason. Dr. Martha Tarbell gives the following description of the theater at Ephesus:

"In Greek cities the theater was the place not only for games, but for popular assemblies. The theater at Ephesus was an immense roofless building resembling a modern hippodrome. Tiers of seats rose one above another save on the straight side where the stage was on a level with the lowest seats. Its capacity has been variously estimated at from twenty-four to fifty-six thousand."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Who was Demetrius and why did he oppose Paul? Why did Paul preach unto the people at

Ephesus, saying, there be no gods which are made with hands? What occupation were the silversmiths engaged in? Describe the action of the mob. Why were Gaius and Aristarchus cast into the theater? Why did not Paul's friends allow him to go into the theater?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Paul's Last Visit to the Churches in Asia. Ac. 20: 6-38; II Cor. 2: 12; II Tim. 4: 13; Ac. 24: 17; I Cor. 16: 8; Lu. 24: 47; Ac. 21: 4, 11; I Thess. 3: 3; Rom. 8: 35; II Cor. 4: 1, 16; I Cor. 12: 28; I Pet. 1: 19; Eph. 1: 18; Heb. 13: 9.

Lesson Three for Sunday July 20, 1941

The Responsibility of the Church Regarding Beverage Alcohol (I Corinthians 5; Titus 2)

Golden Text: Ye are the salt of the earth. Matt. 5: 13a.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

1 CORINTHIANS 5:

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

TITUS 2:

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in piety.

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be soberminded.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus about A. D. 59. His Epistle to Titus was written when he was in prison in Rome, and shortly before his death, A. D. 65.

Place: Corinth was located in Greece, and not a great many miles from the city of Athens.

Persons: Paul, Titus and others.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To set forth the truth that the church should take a definite stand against beverage alcohol and every other evil, and to emphasize the need of correct teaching of the scriptures.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—II Cor. 6: 14; Eph. 5: 11; II Thess. 3: 14.

T.—I Cor. 1: 20; 10: 27; Jon. 17: 15.

W.—Rom. 16: 17; II Thess. 3: 6, 14.

T.—Col. 4: 5; I Tim. 3: 7.

F.—II Tim. 1: 13; 2: 9, 10; I Pet. 3: 34.

S.—I Cor 14: 34; Col. 3: 18; I Tim. 2: 11; 6: 1.

S.—I Pet. 3: 1, 5; Eph. 6: 24; I Tim. 4: 12.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with the way the church should assert itself concerning the evils so prevalent among Christian believers and non-Christians. The study is confined mainly to the discussion of the printed text. The student is urged, therefore, to make a careful study of what Paul taught in the two short passages here used; namely, First Corinthians 5: 1-13. and the epistle to Titus 2: 1-8.

Moreover, it will be well to study the scripture references carefully as given under the heading **DAILY BIBLE READINGS** for the purpose of acquiring a clearer understanding of the lesson in hand.

I. PAUL REBUKES THE PRACTICE OF IMMORALITY IN THE CHURCH AT CORINTH (I Cor. 5: 9-13)

1. Paul's Advice to the Brethren at Corinth:

In verse nine Paul makes reference to a letter which he had written previously to the Corinthian brethren. Some Bible students think this was an epistle written to them before, but which was

lost, while there are others who think it is to be understood that Paul had written this advice before he had received full information of their whole case; but, upon becoming better informed, thought it greatly needful now to be more specific in giving advice.

In the former case Paul did not mean for the brethren not to keep company or to have anything to do with the **fornicators, extortioners, or idolaters of the world**. To do that would be practically impossible. Christians today have to carry on business relationships with the corrupt people of the world. "Paul had written to the Corinthians not to have anything to do with men of impure life; but he had not meant, now he tells them, that they were to have no dealings with those or with the covetous, extortioners or idolaters of the world, that is, those of the church, for avoidance of such would be impossible."—**Tarbell's Teachers' Guide**. Matthew Henry says, "He does not forbid their eating and conversing with the fornicators of this world, etc. They know no better. They profess no better. The gods they serve, and the worship they render to many of them, countenance such wickedness. 'You must needs go out of the world if you will have no conversation with such men.'" In most any church community, Christians living there have to carry on, to a certain degree, converse and community affairs with worldly-minded individuals. To do otherwise would be impractical in modern civilization.

But, in the latter case, Paul tells these Corinthian brethren that if any man that is named a brother be a **fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reveler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner**, (v. 11),

with such a one do not keep company. In giving this advice, Paul meant that if any professing Christian who, being a member of a Christian church, were a fornicator, covetous, an idolater, or a railer, the other brethren who were not should not keep company with them, nor so much as to eat with them. They were to shun such—have no converse, no familiarity with him. Since he has forsaken the strict teachings of the Master, avoid eating and drinking with such a person. Such corrupt acts disgrace Christ and the name "Christian." They may call themselves brethren in Christ," but they are not true Christians. What Paul meant was that no brother of such impure life should be associated with nor tolerated to remain in the church. Separate him from the company and the converse of the true and faithful brethren.

But, Why, let us ask, should we shun the company of a profane or loose Christian, rather than that of a profane and loose person of the world? Paul gave his reason for this argument. We have discussed this in the following subtopic in a brief way.

2. Paul's Reason for his Argument:

For Christians to avoid those without; that is, the profane or loose heathen, they would, in Paul's way of putting it, have to go out of the world. This would be impossible so long as they had business in the world. These Corinthian brethren could not, according to Paul's argument, continue to live in Corinth, or elsewhere, and avoid business or domestic contacts with the heathen. These heathen, persons without the church and not ever having professed Christianity, God will judge, said Paul. They must be left to God's judgment, (v. 13).

But the profane or loose Christians, those within the church, are to be avoided in converse and sociable contacts on the part of the true Christian brethren.

Why? They took upon themselves, as did the other Christians, the vows of the Christian religion. They were thus bound by the laws and rules of the Christian faith to live and remain ever true to God. They, together with the other Christian brethren, united to form a Christian brotherhood; hence they took upon themselves the obligations and responsibilities of being true to Christ and to the organized church. Moreover, the profane or loose Christian is liable to the judgment of those set over them in the administration of the church affairs, as well as that of God. They are also liable to the judgment and criticism of the members of the same Christian society. As a natural consequence, every true Christian would look upon the profane and loose Christian and classify him unfit for Christian fellowship and familiar converse with themselves. Therefore, Paul reasons that it is highly proper for the true Christians to separate themselves from the profane and loose members of the church. Have no company with them, nor eat with them. Get them out of the church. To continue to fellowship with them would tend to corrupt and weaken the Christian morale of the whole church, because the corrupt members would have a tendency to spread their evil deeds. In our own language, for example, if a few of the church membership begin to go to the shows, card parties, dance halls, bathing beaches, night clubs, etc., with the world, then other members of the church will soon think it is all right to do such things and will develop a desire for such practices. The thing to do, in Paul's opinion, is to separate them from the company of the church. Put them on their guard by separating them from the true and tried members of the church. Let them see themselves as they really are, and judge for themselves where they stand in the presence of God and before mankind.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What evil had crept into the Corinthian church? Why did Paul not advise the brethren not to keep company with, nor converse with the fornicators, etc. of the world? On the other hand, why did he advise the true and faithful Christian not to eat nor keep company with Christians who were fornicators, drunkards, revilers, etc.? Give his argument for the difference. What should be done with such church members?

II. THE PASTORAL DUTIES OF A TRUE MINISTER (Titus 2: 1-8)

The apostle Paul laid down in these first eight verses of chapter two in his epistle to Titus some very important duties of a true minister of God. He is here exhorting Titus to a faithful discharge of his office as a minister of the gospel.

1. To Preach Sound Doctrine:

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine, verse 1. In the first place Paul is here urging Titus to preach the true doctrines of the gospel of Christ. The apostle cautioned young Titus to be careful to preach sound doctrine. Paul's use of the adversative word **but** in verse one points back, many believe, to the corrupt teachers who had given false teachings of the scriptures in opposition to Christ's disciples. Thus, he exhorted Titus to be careful to preach sound doctrine as it is in Christ Jesus.

Ministers of the gospel should be very careful to teach only such truths as the Word of God contains, or as are in keeping with the scriptures. Sunday School teachers should be careful to rightly explain the Sunday School lessons so that the students in Bible classes will receive correct instructions in the scriptures. Such is greatly needed today because of so much false teaching and preaching concerning the Word of God.

2. To Teach Aged Men:

In the next place the apostle exhorted Titus, in a special sense, to teach aged men to be **sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience**, verse 2. These are cardinal virtues for the Christian to observe. The old men of the church are to live these Christian principles in their every-day lives before God and the world. Accordingly, Paul would have Titus to impress upon their minds the necessity of exercising these Christian graces both for their own sakes and for the good of others. Teach them to be living examples of the teachings of Christ, and to be strong pillars of the living church. Do not fail to do your duty toward the old men of the church.

3. To Teach Aged Women:

Relative to the aged women, Paul urged Titus also to instruct them that **they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things**, verse 3. As in the case of old men, so in the case of old women, the apostle desired that proper instructions be given to them. The aged women should live holy lives, and observe the cardinal principles of Christian conduct, as was stated concerning the old men, for such will rightly apply to both sexes. They are to know their duty to God and to the world similarly as the old men, for both are held responsible for their Christian conduct. Paul's striking expression to the Corinthian brethren in I Cor. 10: 31, will aptly apply here: "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Also verse eight in the fourth chapter of Philippians is appropriate in this connection. (Look it up and read it.)

Note further, the old women are not to be sowers of discord nor slanderers or backbiters—**false accusers**. They are **not to be given to much wine** for it would be highly unbecoming to their sex and

age. It would be shameful and immodest, both of mind and body, in old women to be guilty of such indulgence. But they are **to be teachers of good things**. They are to set examples of good teaching by their chaste lives and holy living. Teach them their duty as becometh saints of God, then their very acts will be the good teachings for others to follow. Moreover, they are to teach the young women. Paul said **That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands**. He observed in his day the need of the young women to be chaste and sober minded, and devoted to their own husbands. They were to be taught to be keepers of their own homes, as well as to be taught the principles of loyalty to their own families. Paul wrote Titus that the elderly women should be **teachers of good things**; that is to say, they were to give proper instruction to the young married women concerning home and home life that they may have good Christian homes. Teach them the essentials of love for their own children, the proper care for them, and not to leave them to others to rear. Paul would have young Titus to understand that it was his duty to urge the elderly women of the church to attend to such duty so **that the word of God be not blasphemed**, verse 5b. The gospel is greatly needed today in the homes of young married people.

4. Titus to Teach Young Men:

Paul urged Titus in Verse six to exhort young men to be sober minded. Teach them the good principles of sobriety so that they will not bring reproach upon themselves and their homes, and not become an offense against society. Right conduct is essential for the young men, as well as it is for others, to maintain true Christian living before the world. It is to be observed that when young Christians misbehave, even unbelievers are shocked at their loose and false conduct.

"The true manner of life for young men is (1) 'Soberminded.' (2) Uncorrupt in their doctrine. None so likely to be corrupt in doctrine as they. (3) 'Give.' There is great temptation to a young man to be a trifler, but he must not yield. (4) 'Sound in speech that cannot be condemned.' The purpose of this conduct of young men is to put to shame the enmity of the gospel, by taking away every opportunity to say something evil of us."—Dr. R. A. Torrey.

Show yourself a pattern of good works. This is what Paul desired Titus to do in his own ministry. As a young man of the gospel, let your life be a pattern of good works. He urged Titus to be sound in doctrine, and to be a good teacher of the correct principles of religion to the old men and women. Paul here reminded him that he could not teach so successfully unless he conducted himself well both in his conversation and in preaching. Preachers of good works must live clean Christian lives, for both good doctrine and good life should go together. The minister who will practice in his daily living things which he preaches unto others will wield greater influence and power upon his church people. They are to be known and respected of all men by their good fruits.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Paul exhort Titus to preach sound doctrine? What did he urge Titus to teach the old men and the old women? What responsibility was Titus to place upon the old women? How were the young women and the young men to be taught? What advice did Paul give to Titus concerning himself? How should the ministers of the gospel conduct themselves today?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Way Servants Should Live to Adorn the Doctrine of Christ.—Titus 2: 9; Col. 3: 22; I Tim. 6: 1, 2; Phil. 2: 14, 15; Rom. 5: 15; Eph. 6: 5-8; I Thess. 4: 6, 7; I John 2: 16.

Lesson Four for Sunday, July 27, 1941

The Holy Spirit Inspires New Testament Letters

(Gal. 1; I Thess. 2; II Tim. 3; II Pet. 3; Jude 1: 1-3)

Golden Text: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. II Tim. 3: 16.

THE PRINTED TEXT*(Authorized Version)***GALATIANS 1:**

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man:

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

2 TIMOTHY 3:

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 PETER 3:

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless:

15 And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you;

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

JUDE

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The Epistle to the Galatians was written about A. D. 58. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written about A. D. 54. The two Epistles to Timothy were written near the end of Paul's life. The Second Epistle of Peter was written about A. D. 66. The Epistle of Jude was written between A. D. 65 and 70.

Places: Galatia was a great district in Asia Minor in Paul's day, while Thessalonica was a city located in what was known as Macedonia.

Persons: Paul, the apostle Peter and Jude.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To teach that Paul received the Gospel by divine revelation; (II) that the Thessalonian brethren considered Paul's epistles as the true Word of God; (III) that Paul's conception of the doctrine of inspiration of the scriptures is true.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—I Cor. 15: 1, Eph. 3: 3.

T.—I Thess. 1: 3; Matt. 10: 40; Gal. 4: 14.

W.—II Pet. 3: 2; II Tim. 1: 13; 2: 2.

T.—Rom. 15 4; II Pet. 1: 20, 21.

F.—II Tim. 2: 21; I Tim. 6: 11.

S.—Cor. 15: 58; Phil. 1: 10; I Thess. 3: 13.

S.—Rom. 2: 4; I Pet. 3: 20.

THE INTRODUCTION

The student is requested to make a careful study of the scripture references and the discussions given in this lesson. It will be well to note what Paul has said of the revelation of the scriptures, and how the Thessalonians received his epistles. The apostle Peter's testimony regarding Paul's sacred writings serve also as a splendid thought in the study of this lesson.

I. PAUL RECEIVED THE GOSPEL BY REVELATION (Gal. 1: 11, 12)

The gospel which Paul preached was given to him by revelation from Christ. He wrote to the Galatian brethren, saying, the gospel which was preached of me is not of men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. In a striking contrast with the Jewish method of salvation through the obedience to the law, Paul's preaching was the doctrine that men are to be saved only by faith, through grace, in Christ Jesus. "He attributes his possession of the truth of the gospel here to the revelation of Jesus Christ, and to God's revelation of Christ in his own heart, both of which are to be taken as identical."—P. E. Huxtable.

Paul desired to impress the fact upon the Galatians that the revelation of the deep spiritual truths of the gospel had come to him, not from man's teachings, but from Christ. Although he had known something of the preaching of the

apostles before his conversion, he had not received this inspiration and revelation of the scriptures from them. The verses that follow plainly indicate that he was thinking chiefly of the revelation which Christ had made known to him when he was on the road to Damascus.

"The fullest and profoundest unveiling of the meaning of the person and work of Christ is found by us in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. He needed a special revelation for the writing of these wonderful letters.... What Paul had was not the result of human wisdom but of divine inspiration—this is what he is emphasizing."—Peloubet's *Select Notes*.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Paul write the Galatian brethren that he had received the revelation of the scriptures from Christ and not from men?

II. THE THESSALONIANS RECEIVED PAUL'S EPISTLES AS THE WORD OF GOD (I Thess. 2: 13)

Paul expresses thanks to God over the fact that the Thessalonians had received his preaching as the word of God, and not as the word of men. He had a right to be thankful for the confidence in which those brethren held him as a true servant of God. What he had preached to them was the divine truth as revealed to him through Christ Jesus. He says he was thankful to God without ceasing; that is, great joy came to his heart whenever he considered how those brethren received his preaching as the word of God, and not as some new doctrine of men. Is it not true that conscientious ministers of the gospel are greatly pleased whenever they see the people receiving with great faith their gospel messages? We think they are. They like to be assured, as Paul was concerning the faith of the Thessalon-

ians, that their labors are bearing fruits for the Master's use.

Moreover, Paul was greatly thankful over the fact that this gospel truth had had a transforming power over the Thessalonians. Observe here also that this gospel truth, **which effectually worketh also in you that believe**, had not only been revealed to Paul by Christ for his own personal good, but also for the purpose of enabling him to impart its divine teachings to these Thessalonians in a convincing manner as to lead them to believe the gospel. Thus it had its transforming power upon them, and caused them to believe in the saving power of Christ. That was the important thing. As the gospel of Christ, through Paul's forceful preaching, had caused many to believe the divine truths with gladness, just so, Paul thanked God for this manifestation of their faith in the holy scriptures. Accordingly, God was to be glorified for all that had been accomplished for the good of these brethren.

"When the gospel message is revealed as the very word of God, it never fails to produce such Christian graces as love and joy, and peace and patience."—Tarbell's *Teachers' Guide*.

This wonderful revelation, which Paul mentions, was no human invention, but it was absolutely divine in origin and nature. It is to be granted, therefore, that this divine transforming power, when working in the hearts of believers, brings about the results of great joy, peace and contentment in the human heart. Nothing else can do this. It is true that the good graces of the gospel are conditioned upon one's implicit faith in the saving power of Christ. In line with this thought, the apostle Peter said in one of his epistles, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and

to brotherly kindness charity" (II Pet. 1: 5-7).

III. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES (II Tim. 3: 14-17)

At the time Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison in Rome, Timothy was in a position of authority at Ephesus, or so it is believed by many Bible students.

1. Personal Admonition to Timothy:

Paul wrote in verse fourteen, given here for discussion, a strong admonition, urging young Timothy to abide in the things which he had learned in the scriptures. He greatly desired his young disciple to maintain the true faith and good work of the gospel ministry in Ephesus. Do not lose interest in preaching the word, nor give up your zeal for the salvation of lost souls. **But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned.** Adhere to the principles of the sacred word which were taught to you from early childhood. Forsake them not for your own good and for the good of others. Note, the apostle gave Timothy just the instruction that was needed to meet the peculiar needs of the situation in Ephesus where he was stationed.

2. His Teachers:

Who had been young Timothy's teachers? Paul himself had given him much and profitable instruction in the word of God. In addition to points of other instruction, Paul had taught him concerning the responsibilities of deacons (I Tim. 3: 8-10, 12, 13). Moreover, Timothy had been with Paul on his second journey and on other occasions, and had learned from his contact with him great gospel truths worthy of any young minister. Remember, Paul called him his "true son in the faith." Dr. William Smith says, "Timothy was one of his most constant companions."

From early childhood Timothy had been taught the sacred writings by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois (II Tim. 1: 5; 3: 14, 15). "From a child" he had learned to "know the holy scriptures." This is a good thought for mothers and grandmothers of today to take notice, and to apply themselves to the teaching of their children and grandchildren the word of God. If it were consistently done in this country, there would be fewer criminals and more Christians, happier living and more peaceful relations one with another. All young mothers would do well to apply the teaching of the scriptures to their own children.

3. Character and Origin of the Scriptures:

The scriptures are holy, having come from God as the divine Creator. Paul wrote Timothy, saying, **they are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ**, verse 15b. They contain the divine truths which shed light upon the plan of salvation given by our Lord. A clear and definite knowledge will enable the enquiring Bible reader to learn the conditions of salvation as taught by Christ. Hence, anyone can obtain this salvation, not merely through a knowledge of the scriptures, for there are some who know and are still lost; but by faith in Jesus, thus manifesting sincere repentance of his sins, and securing forgiveness of them by the Lord Jesus. The scriptures constitute the key which unlocks the mysteries of salvation to a lost world.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, verse 16. This verse contains some vital truths for study. First, it is emphatically asserted that the scriptures are given by the inspiration of God. Second, the word **doctrine** in the Authorized Version is changed in

the Revised Version to the word **teaching**. Therefore, the inspired word of God is profitable to be taught to those who are ignorant of its meaning and purpose to mankind. God called his prophets of old and his disciples and apostles to teach—reveal—the meaning and purpose of his holy word to a lost world. It is God's will that all may have a definite understanding of his way toward all races of people. Third, the word **reproof** comes after teaching because it has to do with the character which teaching makes. "It proves and reproofs. It is the plumb line that we drop by the wall to see if it is straight"—**Dr. Martha Tarbell**. It is the yardstick, or the spiritual measuring rod, by which we measure one's conduct by Christian standards. Fourth, the word **correction** means making right or restoring to right relationships. Its object is that of making right what one has found to be wrong. Hence, the scriptures are also profitable for setting aright, correcting those in error, as well as for teaching and reproof. They are the earthly pilgrim's spiritual guide. While the plumb line may show that the wall leans, yet it cannot straighten it; and the yardstick may reveal that the cloth is too short, but cannot lengthen it; the holy Bible, however, shows us not only where-in we are wrong, but also it can set us aright if we will only obey its teachings.

It is told of the Italian sculptor Canova that, upon seeing a piece of marble which had been secured at great cost for a noted statue, his skilled eye discovered a little line of black running through it, and he rejected it. He could discover the black but he could not make black white. The Bible discovers not only the black in human hearts, but it can make them white.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why did Paul admonish Timothy to abide in the things which had been taught him in the Bible? Who had been young Timothy's teachers

of the scriptures? What is the duty today of mothers concerning teaching their children the Word of God? Discuss the character and the origin of the scriptures. How should the scriptures be used? Discuss the four points of study laid down here in the last two paragraphs of this topic.

III. PETER'S TESTIMONY REGARDING THE EPISTLES OF PAUL (II Pet. 3: 14-16)

It is well to note that the apostle Peter addressed his First and Second Epistle to the Christians in Asia Minor. The few verses taken from the Second Epistle, chapter three, for discussion under this topic express the apostle's testimony concerning Paul's letters to the brethren in Christ.

1. The Wisdom of Paul:

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things (new heavens, new earth, righteousness, verse 13), be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, verses 14, 15. Let us remember that Paul had given counsel to the brethren in his epistles concerning the making use of the divine forbearance, thus manifesting patience and care in order to be at peace with the Lord. Note that the apostle Peter declares in these verses that Paul possessed an uncommon measure of wisdom which had been given unto him by the heavenly Father.

Paul had eminent knowledge concerning the mysteries of the gospel, and the apostle Peter recognized this fact. Thus, he was assuring the brethren to whom he addressed these words that Paul was a man who possessed great understanding of the scriptures. Peter said that this wisdom was given to him, not that

he had acquired it through the means of human instrumentality. God has and does reveal to certain individuals mysteries of his holy Word. It is also true, the understanding and knowledge that qualifies persons to preach the gospel most effectively are the gifts of God. The successful minister is inspired with divine wisdom and power to be able to accomplish great things for the cause of Christ. Moreover, the great men of God impart, set forth in their spiritual teachings, to men in measure as they have received from God. They could do no greater. Remember, Christ said of Paul, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Ac. 9: 15). It is splendid for a great servant of God to give, like the apostle Peter did of Paul, good testimony of another minister's fine work which has been achieved with success for the cause of righteousness.

2. Some Things Hard to Understand:

The apostle Peter tells us that there are some things in Paul's epistles which are hard to be understood. There are many subjects in the scriptures which are hard for most people to understand. This is especially true of some of the prophecies. There are others which are hard because of their sublimeness, such as the mysterious doctrines. It is also true that the weakness and limitations of men's minds cause most people to be unable to understand the mysteries of God's word.

In I Corinthians 2: 14, Paul said, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." Paul spoke a great truth here, for the unlearned and the unstable individuals not only fail to grasp the correct meaning of spiritual things, but also make unwarranted attacks upon the word of

God. Thus the perverter wrests—seeks to turn from their true bearing and significance—the scriptures in order to have them mean what the heavenly Father did not intend. Such twisters of the true meaning which the Holy Spirit gave to the Word tend to greatly pervert it, and leave false impressions upon the minds of others. Hence, it is not only not safe for one to believe such wresters of the sacred scriptures, but also it is dangerous to keep company with such perverters of God's truth. Many have been led into wrong paths by following such false wresters of the word.

The apostle Peter says further that such perverters bring upon themselves their own destruction. Such, neither being led by the Spirit, nor following in the paths of righteousness, are certain to twist the scriptures out of their true bearing, and thus bring upon themselves condemnation. But those who have heard and learned of the Father through the leadings of the Holy Spirit are assured of understanding correctly the great purpose and meaning of the

scriptures. This class of people are desirous, therefore, of knowing and understanding through the teaching of the Holy Spirit the correct meaning of the word of God. Thus, the apostle Peter meant to impress this fact upon the minds of those who would read his epistles that they might remember Paul's wonderful teachings which he had given to them.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What is significant about the wisdom which the apostle Peter said Paul had? Why did he call attention to this wisdom in his letter to the Christians in Asia Minor? What was the source of the wisdom? Why should ministers acknowledge and greatly respect the fine achievements of others in the religious field? What did Peter say about the hard things mentioned by Paul in his epistles? Discuss the wresters, or twisters of the word of God. What is promised to them?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Obligation that Rests upon Us to Contend for the Faith.—Jude 1: 1-25.

Lesson Five for Sunday, August 3, 1941

Paul Preaches Faith in Christ

(Romans 3 and 5; Galatians 3)

Golden Text: As it is written, The just shall live by faith. Rom. 1: 17.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

ROMANS 3:

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man

is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentile also;

30 Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law

through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

ROMANS 5:

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The Epistle to the Romans was written about A. D. 60. The Epistle to the Galatians was written, probably, a short time before about A. D. 58 or 59.

Place: Both of these epistles were written in Corinth during Paul's third visit there.

Persons: Paul directed his message of justification by faith to the Romans and the Galatians.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To teach that salvation is obtained by the exercise of faith in Jesus Christ.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ac. 15: 11; 26: 22; Heb. 11: 4.

T.—I Pet. 1: 10; Gal. 3: 28; Col. 3: 11.

W.—Rom. 11: 32; Eph. 1: 7, 8; 2: 8.

T.—Col. 1: 20; Heb. 9: 15; Eph. 2: 9.

F.—Jon. 16: 33; Eph. 2: 14; Col. 1: 20.

S.—I Cor. 15: 13; Eph. 2: 18.

S.—Heb. 3: 6; 10: 19.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson brings us to the very heart of the gospel. It enters into the discussion of how people may be saved. Paul, in these scripture verses given in this lesson text, takes the stand that salvation is obtained through faith in Christ, and not by works of the Mosaic Law.

Paul's own experience of salvation by faith in Christ enabled him to preach boldly unto others how to be saved and how to live a life worthy of praise. He sets forth most clearly in these verses the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ Jesus. He laid down this doctrine in his letters to the Romans and The Galatians.

We wish to call the student's atten-

tion to the third chapter of Galatians, given for study in the Additional Home Study section at the end of this lesson. The class should make a careful study of this chapter.

I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST

(Rom. 3: 21-28)

In his Epistle to the Romans Paul's great theme is stated in these words: "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1: 17b).

1. Justification Defined:

"The righteousness of God is neither an attribute of God nor the changed character of the believer, but Christ himself, who fully met in our stead and behalf every demand of the law, and who is by the act of God called imputation (Lev. 25: 50; Jas. 2: 23), 'made unto us... righteousness' (1 Cor. 1: 30).—Dr. I. C. Scofield. "This righteousness is 'apart from the law'; that is, it is not obtained by obeying the law, for law cannot impart it, yet it is in harmony with the

law, for it is witnessed by the law and the prophets."—Tarbell.

The prophets revealed, through their teachings of the Scriptures, the sin-bearers, the transgressors, while the Mosaic Law revealed or laid down what constitutes the transgressions. While the law demanded justice toward all men and strict obedience to God, the prophets promised, through the teaching of the law, God's mercy upon all who would obey his commandments. It is on the cross of Calvary that justice and mercy meet. Paul declared that justice is from God, and that through faith in Jesus Christ mankind is able to appropriate, that is, obtain the heavenly blessings. "Paul does make it clear that the supreme element in propitiation is in the vindicating of divine righteousness."—C. R. Erdman. Any person who repents of his sins and accepts with all his heart the crucified Christ as his Lord and personal Savior becomes a new creature. He is the new man in Christ Jesus. He has been made right with God. He has been justified through the manifestation of his faith in the Son of God.

2. Definition of the Sinful State:

All men have sinned and have come short of the glory of God, verse 23. What is sin? "Sin is transgression, an overstepping of the law, the divine boundary between good and evil (Ps. 51: 1; Lu. 15: 29)."—Dr. I. C. Scofield. Sin is the disobedience of man against the divine will of God. The failure to do as one ought toward himself, his fellow men and his Creator is sin. It may be a sin of careless neglect to perform just obligations to self, fellow men or to God; or it may be a wilful act committed to gratify one's personal ambitions or desires, or those of others. Nevertheless, such is sin—the transgression of divine law.

Through the transgression of God's law in the garden of Eden all have been

brought under the curse of the Adamic sin (Gen. 2: 17; 3: 19). Thus, sin entered the world through Adam (Rom. 5: 12). It is universal; that is, all are under the curse of sin, Christ alone excepted. In Romans 11: 32 Paul said, "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." In Galatians we read, "But the Scriptures hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus might be given to them that believe" (Gal. 3: 22).

All will admit that sin is an evil which is universal among all races, whether highly civilized or brutally savage. Its origin is of the Devil or Satan (Isa. 14: 12-14). Being surrounded by evil influences, and living under the curse of sin, mankind is, at times, prone to commit sinful acts. Thus, the state or condition under which human life goes on in this world is that of evil environment, as well as that of good surroundings. Both good and evil are present. Sin and Satan, on the one hand, are ever opposing God and righteousness on the other. The conflict has been going on ever since Adam transgressed in the garden of Eden.

3. What about Boasting and Glorifying?

Paul warned against one's boasting and glorifying over good works and self-righteousness. A man is not redeemed by boasting of his good works, however great they may have been. Neither is one saved by his glorifying for having kept the law. But a person is made right with God by exercising faith in Christ. Remember the story of the Pharisee and the publican who went up to the temple to pray, and what Jesus said about them (Lu. 18: 9-14). In verse 27, Paul said, What is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of what works? Nay: but by the law of faith. "Was Paul making the law worthless by emphasizing faith? By no means; but by declaring this doctrine he

was establishing the law. This Paul proves in the next chapter by quotations from Scripture."—Tarbell's *Teachers' Guide*.

People are not to boast nor to take glory unto themselves for having kept the law or done good works. While it is a pleasure to do good and live right before the Lord, yet one should not take credit unto himself by boasting and glorying over his good deeds. God will give just recompense for kind deeds performed and the manifestation of good Christian conduct. People are to live by faith in Christ, for it is he who redeems; and not by glorying in the keeping of the law and doing noble works, for such would be self-exaltation.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Upon what grounds may a person be justified before God? What is meant by "All have sinned and have come short of the glory of God"? Why did Paul warn against one's boasting or glorying over the keeping of the law and doing good works?

II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF SALVATION (Rom. 3: 29-31)

One of the chief things which Paul preached was the universality of salvation for both Jew and Gentile, bond and free. It is scripturally true that Christ died for all. It is not the heavenly Father's will that any should be lost, but that all might be saved. But the Jews believed that salvation was for them, and that if the Gentiles desired it, they were to submit to the rites and requirements of the Mosaic Law. Paul differed with them, however, by declaring that salvation is for all who need Christ Jesus.

Is he the God of the Jews only? came the question from Paul. Did he not send his only begotten Son into the world in order that "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"? Does this not include the Jew

and the Gentile, the bond and the free alike? Is he not God also of the Gentiles? How do you reason on this point? Paul here meant to make it deftly plain that Christ died for all, and that salvation is for all.

"In Paul's thought we achieve the supreme end for which the law was given when we come to Christ and trust in him for salvation. When men became sons of God through faith in Christ, the Mosaic economy, which had been like a tutor during the days of one's childhood, was superseded by the gospel."—Arnold's *Practical Commentary*.

Matthew Henry has the following to say on this point. "Can it be imagined that a God of infinite love and mercy should limit and confine his favors to that little perverse people of the Jews, leaving all the rest of the children of men in a condition eternally desperate? This would by no means agree with the idea we have of the divine goodness, for his tender mercies are over all his works; therefore it is one God of grace that justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith, that is, both in one and the same way."

God's sacred law is still of use to convince people of what has taken place, and also to direct them for the future. Although a person cannot be saved by the observance of the old Mosaic Law (but by the law of grace through faith in Jesus Christ), it is a rule in the hands of God which reveals man's relationship to the divine order.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What proof have we that salvation is for all people? What did the Jews believe concerning this point? What is Paul's stand concerning the universality of salvation? Does faith in Christ do away with the law? Of what use may the law be to us today as a guide to human conduct?

III. THE RESULTS OF BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN CHRIST

(Rom. 5: 1, 2)

1. Peace with God:

Sin always separates the individual from having peace with God. But all who have been redeemed through their faith in Christ have the assurance of peace with God. The divine pardon and acceptance is the result of a person's manifestation of faith in Jesus. This peace comes through the individual's guilt, his transgressions, being removed by Christ when the conditions of salvation have been met. Thus, the individual is justified by faith, not by works; but by repenting of his sins and accepting Christ as his personal Saviour, not by keeping the Mosaic Law. Justification, therefore, removes the guilt, and gives room for peace in the human heart. When the sinful obstacles are removed by faith in Christ, peace is assured. Accordingly, by exercising faith in the Son of God we lay hold of eternal life, and have peace with the heavenly Father. It is through Christ, then, that man is justified, and is assured of peace with God.

2. The Saint's Happy State:

The saint's happy state is a state of

grace. It is God's loving kindness which is felt by the implicit believer in Christ. The person who has God's love in his heart, and who seeks to deal justly with his fellow men day by day is in a state of grace, abounding in the work of the Lord and rejoicing in his salvation. Paul says, **We have had our access by faith into this grace**, through Christ Jesus. Therefore, the Christian rejoices in this grace, which through faith in Christ, has brought him in right relationship with God. The truly consecrated Christian can be assured of God's favors and blessings as long as he maintains this saving faith in Christ. Down the ages many saints of God have freely testified of having witnessed in their hearts this happy state.

CLASS DISCUSSION: When a person is justified by faith in Christ what is the result? What must an individual do to be assured of peace with God? Have a member of the class to discuss the saints' happy state with God.

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Promise of the Spirit through Faith.—Galatians 3: 1-29. Please study carefully this chapter in connection with the lesson discussion.

Lesson Six for Sunday, August 10, 1941

James Teaches Consistent Christian Living

(The Epistle of James)

Golden Text: Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Jas. 1: 27.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

JAMES 1:

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom

is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a

kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

JAMES 2:

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

JAMES 4:

13 Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain;

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

JAMES 5:

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The date is uncertain, but it is placed by some as early as 50 A. D. If this is correct, it makes this book the earliest of the New Testament writings.

Place: The Epistle was written, it is believed, in Jerusalem.

Persons: The writer of the Epistle of James and the "Dispersion."

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I) To show that God is the divine Giver; that anger and wrath are contrary to righteousness; and that Christian works are vital to good Christian living.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Mal. 3: 6; Jon. 3: 27; Rom. 11: 29.

T.—Jer. 2: 3; Jon. 1: 13; Eph. 1: 12.

W.—Pr. 10: 18; 17: 27; Ecl. 5: 1, 2.

T.—I Cor. 15: 2; Col. 3: 8; Heb. 2: 3.

F.—I Pet. 1: 9; 2: 1; Matt. 7: 21.

S.—Rom. 2: 13; I Jon. 3: 7.

S.—Jas. 1: 23; Matt. 7: 26.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson is based upon some of the teachings taken from the Epistle of James. The writer was called James the Just, and was the brother of our Lord. He addressed this letter to the

"Dispersed brethren" or the twelve tribes scattered abroad due to the great persecution of the Christians. The letter is called "general" epistle because it was not written for a particular church, but for Christians in general.

The main points of discussion as laid down in the study are: God the true and perfect Giver; anger, hatred and strife opposing factors to righteousness, and faith justified by good Christian works. James stressed, in these few verses of the lesson text, these fundamental principles concerning God, righteousness and correct Christian living.

I. GOD THE SOURCE OF ALL GOOD GIFTS (Jas. 1: 17, 18)

All good gifts come from God. They range from the smallest temporal blessings to the greatest spiritual blessings which are granted to every true child of God. It is scripturally true that God is the Creator of every perfect gift unto mankind.

1. Temporal Gifts:

Every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, verse 17a. The light from the sun is a blessing to everyone. The fertile soils, the wooded forests, the mineral mines and oil wells in the earth, the waterfalls, the rains and the seasons, "and the cattle upon a thousand hills,"—all are temporal blessings granted unto mankind by the heavenly Father. Such gifts are for man to utilize for the glory of God. They were granted unto him for a purpose and he should use them in the right way. God did not intend for us to put these temporal blessings to misuse, nor to squander them by wasteful living. Neither does God want man to convert any of these material blessings into manufactured products for the purpose of social corruption or human destruction.

God created these things because they are good for man's progress and achievement in building higher standards of civilization and for the establishment of a noble order of human living. But, often they are put to corrupt and inhuman uses by sinful men to bring condemnation and destruction upon others. These godgiven earthly blessings have been, in many instances and because of the prevalence of evil in the world, used as a curse to civilization. This has been true in such cases as personal and group selfishness, envy and hatred, lust, covetousness, wars and international entanglements. When men's minds are

prone to evil, and Satan has sway over them, God's temporal blessings then are caused to become curses in the hands of such wicked people. Sin in the hearts of such men is the cause. Thus, the wonderful temporal blessings of God can, and often do become, in the hands of cruel and corrupt men, curses to society. Not that God willed it to be so, but that wicked men purpose in their hearts to make it so.

2. Spiritual Blessings:

God is the Father also of all spiritual light, and with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, verse 17b. May we observe, what the sun is in nature to reflect light and heat to the earth to bless mankind, just so, God is in divine grace, providence and spiritual light to bless the human heart. He is the light of reason, judgment and understanding. Moreover, he gives the spiritual blessings, as the light of faith, purity and love to those who will accept his holy gifts. Through his great love for us God gave his Son that we might be redeemed, forgiven of our sins by accepting Jesus as the greatest spiritual blessing sent unto the human race. Remember, of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, verse 18. All true children of God are the persons whose sins have been forgiven by their acceptance of this spiritual gift of the Father. God's divine blessings are bestowed upon everyone who will open his heart to receive them, regardless as to race or color, rank or station in life. It is by God's own holy will, not by our strength or volition, that the spiritual blessings are showered upon us. But we are to be willing to comply with God's plan by our obedience to his divine program. We are to seek his blessings through faith in and obedience to his divine laws concerning our salvation. Then, he will assure us that we shall receive these spiritual gifts at his own

hands. We are to seek these blessings in the light of the gospel of Christ, believing that we shall be awarded according to God's own holy will.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Discuss the material blessings which God has given to man. How are we to receive the spiritual blessings which God has in store for us?

II. ANGER A HINDRANCE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

James says, **Let every man be slow to wrath.** He knew that anger stirs up wrath and hatred in the heart, and always a hindrance to righteousness. A person should be slow to become vexed at things which would tend to provoke him. He should take a moment to think seriously over the matter before allowing himself to speak or act upon the situation. On the other hand, he will most likely do the wrong thing if he allows his feelings to give way to vexation. Many people have said and done things hurtful to themselves and to others by allowing impassioned feelings to get the better of them. Men have committed serious crimes on the spur of the moment, whereas, if they had taken time to think more seriously, they would not have committed the act for anything. But it was too late.

Further more, James says, **Let every man be . . . , slow to speak.** Herein he uttered a great truth; for, if people would be more considerate before expressing their feelings on matters that vitally affect the human heart, they would then have much less regret for what they had done. Angry words and harsh dealings with others often make aching wounds hard to heal.

W. L. Oesterly says, "Man's wrath is rarely, if ever, justifiable; even 'just indignation' is too often mixed with other elements; and frequently the premises on which it is founded are at fault. Men

unlike God, never know all the circumstances of the case."

Inasmuch as human anger never promotes righteousness, nor develops a good spirit in the human heart, James here lays down three things required of Christians; namely, (1) alertness of hearing; (2) deliberateness of speech; (3) control of temper. One should be ready to hear and weigh the truth; be careful and deliberate in expressing his opinions; and then be ready and willing to control his temper in all matters of vital concern. This is, according to James, a fundamental principle which all Christians should observe. The Christian is to maintain this attitude in his every-day living with his fellow men and before God. The student of the Young People's and the Adult classes should take this principle to heart and apply it to his own life.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why should a person be slow to wrath? Discuss the damaging effects which very often result from expressions of anger and wrath? Discuss the three things which James says are required of Christians.

III. HOW TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

(Jas. I: 21, 22)

A person, by having put away all filthiness and overflowing wickedness out of his heart, is to receive with meekness the engrafted word, verse 21b. First, he is to get rid of filthiness and wickedness, and then let the word of God flow into his heart. Malice and illwill, anger and hatred are to be removed so that the engrafted word may have right-of-way in the human heart. This engrafted word, James says, is able to save your soul.

Matthew Henry has drawn two lessons from the first part of this verse; namely, 'first, that sin is always defiling things—the very filthiness itself;

second, that there is abundance of evil in us which needs watching most of the time. Many kinds of temptations are felt and seen about us most of the time, and even the best of Christians are to be on their guard to avoid the commitment of evil. Human conduct; that is to say, one's own thoughts, speech and deeds should be carefully guarded day by day.

God's word should be heard—heeded by everyone with care and deep consideration at all times. People should study the Word, hear it preached and taught, with the attitude and intent of receiving and abiding by its truths. It is for all, and, therefore, everyone should hear the gospel messages with a heart to accept its teachings. There is nothing so sacred, so assuring and so enduring as the holy Word of God for lost souls. It should be heard with a mind ready to understand; be received with a heart full of joy to accept it; and be greatly felt by redeemed souls willing to worship God for its eternal influence.

Hearing the Word is for the sake of doing Christian service. James says futhermore, **Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only**, verse 22. We are urged to put into practice the engrafted word which we have received. As the material blessings of life are to be properly utilized for the good of society, just so, the exercising of our faith in the word of God is essential for true Christian living, and for the spreading of the gospel of Christ. Faith without works is dead. A man may believe that he can perform a certain task, but if he never puts forth any effort to accomplish it he will fail. As a fine education wastes away over a period of years because of mental inactivity on the part of the educated person, so the refined Christian character or the individual loses his spiritual fervor and religious activity whenever he begins to

leave off his Christian services and devotions to God. Thus, in the light of Christianity he becomes a dead member. But works coupled with faith produce results for the glory of God.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Let the class discuss what James has had to say about faith and works. Why should Christians show their faith by their works?

IV. SOME TRUTHS CONCERNING FAITH AND WORKS

(Jas. 2: 14-17)

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? What is the use for a man to have faith when he manifests not the spirit to perform good works? Can that faith save him? James says in verse 23, chapter 1, "If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror." He goes his way, soon forgetting what manner of man he is. Jesus said in Matthew 7:26, "Everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." When the storms and temptations of life come upon him, he will be subject to fall, like the house built upon the sand when the rain and the floods come. Christ made it plain here that the nondoers of the things which he taught would have weak foundations like houses built on shifting sands.

Dan Crawford once said, "Now is the time to produce our Christianity and live the life, instead of merely talking the talk. Doctrine apart from the deed is nothing but the skin of truth set up and stuffed."

On one occasion Christ said to his disciples, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day" (Jon. 9: 4a). Since Christ saw the need of healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing and preaching the gospel to a lost

world, is it not also reasonable to think that God wants the believers in his only begotten Son to show their faith by their works? We believe he does. Christ saw the necessity of doing his Father's will while he was upon earth. His three and a half years of gospel ministry were crowded with religious works for the salvation of lost souls. It is also necessary today for us to be willing to do Christian service? It certainly is. The apostles showed their faith in and allegiance to Christ by manifesting their untiring zeal in preaching the gospel wherever they went. Some of the followers, however, very likely became careless and did very little, or no work in the Master's cause. James understood this. Inasmuch as he addressed his Epistle "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," and emphasized in the verses used in this topic the need of the works, it is to be understood that he had observed, or had been informed of the great need of works being shown among some of the brethren who were lacking in Christian service. He emphasized that they were to show their faith by their

works. Judging from their Christian works, the world today cannot tell some Christians from other people, because they are not showing that they are Christians. They are simply inactive members of the church. They claim faith in Christ, but do nothing to show their faith in the Master. James calls this a dead faith. Not until this faith is expressed in "actual works" can it be considered as a "living faith." James declares that it is dead, lifeless and of no profit.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Discuss James' point of view concerning dead faith. What examples have we of good Christian works as shown by some Bible characters? What was Christ's example relative to doing God's will? Why should Christians today show their faith by performing Christian service?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Looking into the Future without Reference to the Will of God.—Jas. 4: 13-17; Lu. 12: 16-21; I Pet. 1: 24, 25; I Cor. 4: 19, 20; Lu. 12: 47; Jon. 9: 41; 15: 22; Rom. 1: 20, 21.

Lesson Seven for Sunday, August 17, 1941

Peter Encourages Suffering Christians (I Peter 4 and 5)

Golden Text: Yet if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. I Pet. 4: 16.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

1 PETER 4:

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of

Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17 For the time is come that judgment

must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19 Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

1 PETER 5:

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you:

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The apostle Peter wrote his First Epistle about A. D. 64.

Place: According to (5: 13) the epistle was written in Babylon, but regarding the meaning of the Babylon as here used, some commentators greatly disagree. It probably refers to Babylon in Mesopotamia Valley, a district lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers.

Persons: The apostle Peter and the brethren to whom he addressed the letter.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To show that it is the duty of Christians to accept suffering in the name of Jesus with patience.

(II). To teach that the church membership should be co-operative and submissive to their superiors, and to be humble and faithful unto the Lord.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—I Pet. 1: 7; I Cor. 3: 13.

T.—I Pet. 1: 5, 6; Rom. 8: 17.

W.—I Pet. 2: 20; I Thess. 4: 11; I Tim. 5: 13.

T.—Mal. 3: 5; Lu. 10: 12, 14; 23: 31.

F.—Ps. 31: 5; Lu. 23: 46; Tim. 1: 12.

S.—Isa. 57: 15; Eph. 5: 21; Ps. 2: 3; Jas. 4: 6.

S.—Ac. 14: 22; Eph. 6: 11, 13; II Tim. 3: 12.

THE INTRODUCTION

The apostle Peter's chief purpose in this Epistle was the encouragement of suffering Christians. It is evident that the brethren in Asia Minor, to whom he wrote this letter, had been enduring

persecutions on the account of their religion.

The student is to remember that, what Peter has had to say about suffering Christians, it is applicable in any age where there are loyal followers of Christ. Such suffering is being witnessed today in the war-stricken countries by numbers of Christ's followers.

I. HOW PERSECUTION AND HUMAN SUFFERING SHOULD BE MET

(I Pet. 4: 12-19)

In a time of much suffering and opposition people are to bear with patience the persecutions and trials which come upon them. We learn that the apostle knew well what it meant to endure sufferings in the name of Jesus Christ. In

the scripture text he, therefore, addressed his words to the Christians in Asia Minor, because they were undergoing hardships under the Neronian persecutions. His purpose was "to strengthen, encourage and comfort" those brethren laboring in the midst of the "fiery trials."

1. Partakers of Christ's Sufferings:

Peter addressed these words to them: **Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you**, verse 12a. The apostle here is encouraging the brethren to endure with patience the fiery trials which the bitter enemies of the Christian religion were waging against them. As Christ endured great buffetings at the hands of his most bitter opponents, and was finally nailed to the cross, in like manner, many of his followers were to expect severe persecutions and even martyrdom by the same arch-enemy Satan. Such trials come to test one's faith and willingness to endure the fiery trials for the cause of righteousness. On the other hand, the apostle Peter urged the brethren to rejoice in the fact that they were partakers of Christ's sufferings. For his great name they could endure the shame and bear the fiery trials thrust upon them by their opponents. "That glory which is surrounding you even now, though you cannot see it, is the Spirit of glory, and the Spirit of God."—Tarbell's Teachers' Guide.

Remember, Christ had in Luke 22: 32 specially commissioned Peter to strengthen the brethren. Accordingly, Peter points out in this epistle that they should be proud to be counted worthy to suffer, as did Christ, for the cause of the gospel. In a true sense they should "rejoice" for Christ's glory will be revealed to the world, and they will receive in due season the great reward for having endured the fiery trials to the end. God's Spirit is with all who endure hardships, bear

the fiery trials and suffer even death for the cause of Christ.

2. No Merit in Suffering for One's Wrong Doing:

Moreover, the apostle advised the brethren in these words: **Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters**, verse 15. Herein lies the contrast: It is honorable to suffer for the cause of righteousness; but it is dishonorable to have to suffer on the account of one's evil deeds. Dr. R. A. Torrey says this concerning Peter's admonition to the brethren: "At the same time he cautions them that there is no merit in the suffering that one brings on himself by wrong doing. Such suffering is simply the practice of our own folly which all men must pay, whether they will or not." Herein lies a good lesson for people today. Many have to suffer shamefully in mind and body because of their misdeeds committed against the laws of God and of men. Yes, they pay the price in shame, whereas the Christian sufferers and martyrs, ever faithful to the cause of lost souls, reap their great reward in spiritual blessings and eternal happiness. The apostle Peter's warning to the brethren was timely and in place concerning human suffering. It is a serious thing for a person to commit murder, theft, or even to be a meddler in other men's affairs. The apostle, accordingly, would not have the brethren to suffer as evil-doers, and as law-breakers, for such would be of no merit to them; but to suffer as Christians would be glory to God and of no shame to themselves. Peter, moreover, advised them that anyone, the righteous and the ungodly, must pass under the judgment of God. There is no wonder that Peter gave this solemn warning to them: **If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?** verse 18. Everyone should take this great question to hear and examine him-

self to see just where he stands before God. If he knows he is not a saved person, then he should seek salvation without delay.

3. Christians to Place Faith in God:

In all sufferings Christians are to commit their faith and trust in God's divine providence. Nothing short of faith and trust in him will suffice for the tried and tested souls in a world of strife and unbelief. The apostle Peter gave this admonition in verse nineteen: **Let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.** As the servants of God labor in his vineyard, the apostle Peter would have them to place the keeping of their souls into the hands of the heavenly Father. Simply trust God for the keeping of their souls while they go forth boldly, laboring to establish wherever they go Christ in the hearts of sinful men. It is interesting to note why Peter spoke of God as the faithful Creator. Note the following quotation.

"That God is faithful is as certain as noonday. He is faithful in the returning of the seasons, and the orbit-order of the stars; faithful to every living creature he has made, providing for its exact sustenance, . . . Not the tiniest bird, not the minutest infusoria, but he has provided its environment. God is the Faithful Creator in the heavens above us, and in the earth beneath."—F. B. Meyer.

We are not to think here of the needless sufferings which are often caused by unfavorable circumstances or unjust conditions, but of that which one's forethought seems to be unable to prevent. "The first things our faith ought to teach us to do with suffering is to accept it. . . . And, then, after we have accepted suffering, we are to use it. Sorrow and disappointment may, by faith, be transmuted into patience and sympathy, and

the deepest of experiences of human and divine fellowship."—William H. Boddy.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How should Christians look upon their suffering for the cause of the gospel? How are they partakers of Christ's suffering? Discuss the difference between suffering in the name of Christ and suffering for one's own wicked deeds. Why did Peter say that there is no merit in suffering for one's own misdeeds? Describe the difference. Why should all Christians commit their faith in God when they are enduring suffering? What has God promised to do for those who believe on his name, and trust him?

II. SOME GREAT PRINCIPLES OF TRUE CHRISTIAN LIVING (I Pet. 5: 5-11)

Upon having explained the duty of the pastors or spiritual guides of the church in the first four verses of chapter five, the apostle Peter turned, in the next few verses, to the membership of the church in telling them how to conduct themselves toward their ministers and to one another.

1. Instruction to the Flock:

Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, verse 5a. The apostle calls them **the younger** to put them in mind of their inferiority; that is, younger in Christian experience than their grave pastors. Thus, they were to submit themselves to the pastors, give due respect and reverence to them. They were to adhere to their admonitions, reproofs and authority on matters pertaining to the Christian faith and to the church. Likewise, all were to be subject one to another. They were to be ready to bear one another's burdens.

Such instruction meant that the apostle Peter was advising the brethren to be united as a band of Christian soldiers, and to stand together for the cause of the church of Christ. Peter

saw that this was very necessary in order that the body of Christian believers, together with their pastors, might be able to stand out more boldly against the bitter thrusts of their opponents. One of the great needs today in the average church is a united Christian front on the part of the church membership and pastor so that the world might know just where they stand regarding the Christian religion. As the apostle instructed the brethren on this important principle of Christian co-operation in the church, just so, both minister and church members should today heed this timely advice. Sunday School students and teachers can well take a lesson here from the apostle Peter on Christian co-operation.

Matthew Henry says, "These duties of submission to superiors in age and office, and subjection to one another, being contrary to the proud nature and selfish interests of men, he (Peter) advises them to be clothed with humility." It is true, God resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble. When personal pride and selfishness are removed by the inflowing of the Spirit of God, it is then that the human heart becomes humble before the Lord. Peter exhorted them in these words: **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time**, verse 6.

2. The Divine Demand for Humility:

Pride and selfishness are the opposites to humility and submissiveness. Satan has to do with the former two, while God seeks to direct the latter. God is emphatically opposed to any form of pride and selfishness because he knows all such human attitudes lead men in the wrong paths. The Pulpit Commentary says, "There is the pride of self-righteousness; the pride of self-glorification; the pride of self-reliance; the pride of self-will, etc." We believe it is correct

to say that pride is found wherever self is put first, thus refusing to submit either to God or man. But it is God who gives his grace to the humble heart. He gives this grace—all kinds of grace—according to the riches of his divine glory to those who are worthy to receive it. Accordingly, this grace is for everyone who will submit himself to God and be filled by him.

Casting all your anxiety (cares) upon him, verse 7a. Here, again, the apostle reminds the brethren to trust God by casting all their anxieties upon God. Too often people worry over disappointments or unfavorable conditions over which they have no control. The apostle, realizing that the brethren were laboring under adverse circumstances and severe difficulties among the heathen in Asia Minor, urged them to cast their burdens and anxieties upon God who is able to care for his own children. Many Christian laborers often reach the point where they become greatly burdened in the spirit and despondent over not being able to advance the cause of Christ just as they wish. This the apostle well understood, and he thus instructed the brethren to cast their burdens upon God, and trust him to bear them up under their moments of trial and great distress. Let God be your burden-bearer, for he has promised to make your burdens easy.

3. The Great Adversary:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, verse 8. The apostle exhorted them to be ever watchful of evil influences which were certain to be about them wherever they labored. Be on your guard against the adversary the Devil. He is ever present to tempt you and to allure you away from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. The expression, "as a roaring lion," suggests to us the two-

fold idea of power and great cruelty. This adversary you are to guard yourselves against at all times, for he "thirsts to destroy your faith, your purity, your peace, your good name."

How are we to resist this adversary? There are three ways in which the apostle Peter told the brethren how they were to resist Satan. First, **Sobriety**. This is the opposite of intoxication. We are to be sober in mind and body, not intemperate in speech nor conduct. The use of strong drink deadens our sensibilities to good conscience and correct reasoning. The indulgence of harsh speaking and bitter accusations of others establish in the human heart the spirit of hatred and revenge. By such man becomes intoxicated, unbalanced in judgment and reason. Hence, Peter warned Christ's followers against such mental and physical indulgencies. Keep yourselves pure in body and in speech. Second, **Vigilance**. Not only were the brethren to be sober in body and mind, but also they were to be ever watchful. It is true, laboring in a world of heathen worship and paganism, the followers of Jesus were to be ever on their guard against the great adversary. Satan often makes his attacks upon us when we are least expecting him. He takes us by surprise, sometimes, in such ways that we can scarcely know we are sinning until we have committed the act. We are, therefore, to take heed that he come not upon us unawares. It is especially true that young converts should be on their guard and ever watchful; for, being young in the faith, they must stand on guard against Satan's alluring temptations and devices to win them back to his side. The victory is to the strong in the faith; that is to say, those who are ever vigilant to do the things that will be acceptable unto the Lord.

Third, **Steadfastness in the faith**. The apostle, again, exhorts the brethren to be **steadfast in the faith**. Keep up your faith in God, and resist the Devil upon every attack which he makes upon you. Our faith in God is the great bulwark which will shield us from the "fiery darts" of the adversary if we will ever stand behind this faith and let God defend us from the evil one. "Satan can do us no harm whilst we are shut up in the strong walls of faith in God."—**The Pulpit Commentary**.

The essential thing, therefore, is for the individual to take a definite stand. This stand must be firm and steadfast upon the principles of right. The individual is to be ready to oppose the Adversary on every hand. There must be no half-way compromising with Satan, no giving over to his alluring devices, nor catering to his sinful ways of life. The man or woman, boy or girl must be ever set for the combat when it comes, whether it be great or small, and stand the test for God and righteousness. Satan must be opposed at all times, rejected in every attack, and put to flight at every point in the conflict of life. He is to be met with the Sword of the Spirit, and to be fought with the Sword of the Spirit.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How did Peter instruct the membership of the church to deal with their elders or pastors? Point out the difference between pride and selfishness as contrasted with humility and submissiveness. How did Peter tell the brethren to maintain their stand against the great adversary Satan?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Reward of the Faithful.—Matt. 5: 3-12; Ps. 51: 17; Isa. 57: 15; 61: 2, 3; I Pet. 3: 14; Lu. 6: 22; Ac. 5: 41; 7: 52; I Pet. 4: 13.

Lesson Eight for Sunday, August 24, 1941

The Writer of Hebrews Explains the New Covenant (Heb. 8 and 9)

Golden Text: Having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation. Heb. 5: 9.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

HEBREWS 9:

11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might re-

ceive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people,

20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The Epistle to the Hebrews was most probably written around A. D. 68 or 69, and before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Place: It is believed that the Epistle was written in Italy.

Persons: Those to whom the Epistle was addressed were Hebrew Christians.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I) To teach that Christ's sacrificial death on the cross is the only means of salvation.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Heb. 3: 1; 8: 2; 10: 1, 4.

T.—Dan. 9: 24; Ac. 20: 28; I Pet. 1: 19.

W.—Rom. 6: 13, 22; Eph. 5: 2.

T.—Heb. 7: 22; Rom. 6.

F.—Heb. 7: 22; I Tim. 2: 5; I Pet. 3:

18.

S.—Ex. 24: 5-8; Lev. 14: 4-7; 16: 14,

15.

S.—Ex. 29: 12, 36; Lev. 8: 15, 19.

THE INTRODUCTION

It is not definitely known who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, but some ascribe it to either Clement of Rome, Luke, Barnabas or Appollos. There are others who ascribe it to Paul. Origin has said, "Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews God only knows."

Before making a careful study of the scripture text in this lesson, the members of the class would do well to study all of chapter eight and the first ten verses of chapter nine of the Epistle, as they bear upon the lesson truths which are developed in the discussion. The central theme of the lesson is Christ the supreme sacrifice for the sins of the world. The study is developed by showing the meaning and the contrasts of the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the supreme sacrifice of the New Testament made through the death of Christ on the cross.

I. CHRIST'S SACRIFICE SUPERIOR TO THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (Heb. 9: 11-15)

Christ is the more perfect sacrifice which has been offered up for the sins of the world. All was changed when he came upon earth, for he came as High Priest to direct sinful men the right way back to God, and to eternal life. "He became a more perfect High Priest in a more perfect sanctuary, one that was not made with hands, was not of this material creation. And he made the perfect sacrifice, not of blood of goats and calves, but of his own blood, securing an eternal redemption, effective for ever his sacrifice was made once for all, needed no repetition, as did the sacrifice of the old covenant."—Tarbell's Teachers' Guide.

1. Christ at the Right Hand of God:

According to Acts 1: 10, Jesus went back to heaven to be with God. He is

there at the right hand of the heavenly Father making intercession for us (Heb. 7: 25). "In this lesson we see him there as a High Priest of whom Aaron and his successors were but types and shadows. His high priesthood has to do with 'good things to come.' The tabernacle or place of God's manifested presence in which he ministers is the real one, heaven, of which the O. T. tabernacle and temple were only types made after the pattern God had shown Moses in the Mount (v. 23; 8: 5; Ex. 25: 40)."—Dr. R. A. Torrey. We are to remember that this true tabernacle, God's only begotten Son, God himself made. Since there had come, therefore, a better tabernacle, there was also a better sacrifice—the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

2. Types and Shadows:

The sacrifice of the blood of goats and calves on the altar in Old Testament times were "only types and pictures or foreshadows of the blood of Jesus Christ" shed on Calvary. It is certain that the blood of goats and calves and bulls had no true cleansing power for the sins of mankind, whereas Christ's blood does have the power to cleanse us from our sins. In Hebrews 10: 4 we read, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Christ has entered into the holy place, through the shedding of his own blood, "once for all" (Ch. 10: 10); but in Old Testament times the high priest entered the holy of holies once a year. This yearly repetition of the high priest's entrance showed the incompleteness, and merely represented the typical character of it (Ch. 10: 1-4).

3. Christ's Atoning Death:

Christ did, by his atoning death on the cross, purchase eternal redemption for us, provided we will accept it. We know sinful works are "dead works" for the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:

23). We know also that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus, eternal life is a gift through the atoning death of Christ for lost humanity; but this gift is to be accepted by sinful men before his shed blood can apply with cleansing power to remove their sins. It is agreed that Christ and his atoning blood are the supreme reality of the cleansing power to free men from sin. There is no other way by which men are to be saved. Sinful men can only have their impure soul's made clean by the atoning grace of the crucified Christ. The acceptance, through repentance, faith and baptism, of the resurrected and ascended Christ as one's personal Savior, is the requirement for the cleansing of wicked souls.

4. Cleansing of the Flesh:

We learn that the blood of Old Testament sacrifices served to "sanctify unto the cleansing of the flesh" (V. 13: R. V.). Such had to do with external, ceremonial defilements. (See Num. 19: 2-20).

If the sacrifice of animals in Old Testament times wrought a ceremonial cleansing, how much more shall Christ's sacrifice cleanse our conscience and free us from our sins? But cleansings were types of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord whose blood cleanseth us. "The Old Testament systems of sacrifices and ceremonies were a setting forth in wondrous pictures the profoundest truths of God about atonement and cleansing, but they were only pictures, not the reality."—**Dr. R. A. Torrey**. The blood of Christ cleanses the soul of the believer. He healed many of physical infirmities as well as cleansed men of their sins while he was upon earth.

"Christ's atoning sacrifice, as shown in verse 15, is represented as availing for those who lived under the old dispensation; it secured 'the redemption of the transgressors that were under the old

covenant.'"—**Dr. Martha Tarbell**. (See also for reference on this point Heb. 7: 22; 8: 6). In reference to the efficacy of the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices, **Matthew Henry** says, "The efficacy of the blood of the legal sacrifices extended to the purifying of the flesh (V. 13): it freed the outward man from ceremonial uncleanness and from temporal punishment, and entitled him to, and fitted him for, some external privileges."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Why is Christ's sacrifice on the cross greater than the Old Testament sacrifices? When Christ went back to heaven, what purpose was in the divine plan for his return to God? Discuss the "types and shadows" as typified in the Old Testament sacrifices. What is the significance of Christ's atoning death? What difference is there between the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the sacrifice of the Lamb of God?

II. THE NEW AND LASTING COVENANT (Heb. 9: 15-22)

In these verses the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews considered the Gospel of Christ under the notion of a will or testament. He considered it the New or the last will and testament of Christ.

1. The Gospel as a Testament:

Let us remember that the solemn transactions carried out between God and man were called covenants, but here it is called a testament. The writer in verse 15 says, speaking of Christ, **He is the mediator of the New Testament**. Christ is the Mediator to redeem people from their sins. God sent him to the world to make intercession for the lost who need to be saved. He came that the promise of eternal inheritance might be made manifest through his ministry and vicarious death on the cross.

"A testament is a voluntary act and deed of a single person, duly executed and witnessed, bestowing legacies on such legatees as are described and characterized by the testator, and which can only take effect upon his death."—**Matthew Henry**. Christ is the Mediator, the intercessor, for lost humanity, that they might receive the promise of eternal salvation. God's purpose in sending him to the world was to redeem people from their transgressions committed against the laws of the Old Testament. They were guilty offenders before God because of their great transgressions. The aim of this testament, this gospel of Christ, is to qualify everyone who will accept its provisions as laid down by the holy One, so that they may not miss the heavenly reward.

Christ said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life" (Jon. 10: 27, 28a). When a person is following Jesus; that is, has become a New Creature, a convert to the Christian faith, he has accepted the New Testament as the gospel plan of salvation.

2. The New Testament Made Effective by Christ's Death:

It was necessary that Christ should die so that this New Testament might be made effective, or adequate for the redemption of lost souls. See verses 16 and 17. Andrew Murray has said, "The blood is through the death; the death is for the blood. The blood-shedding and the death are the redemption, the ransom, that by sin-bearing and atonement deliver from transgressions and their power." "Though man through sin has forfeited his life, God has established his covenant of grace whereby Christ not only dies for him (Rom. 5: 6), but bequeaths him the legacy to eternal salvation (Heb. 5: 9)."—**Dr R. A. Torrey**. Thus it is that Christ the Mediator of the New covenant puts away sin by the

sacrifice of himself on the cross, and opens the way for a new life in the favor and power of God, for all who will accept this New Testament covenant.

Moreover, there can be no remission of sins apart from the blood sacrifice on the cross. The apostle Peter wrote the brethren in Asia Minor these words, "Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied" (I Pet. 1: 2). Grace and peace are promised to those who, through obedience to the New Testament teachings, have had the cleansing blood applied to their hearts. In this connection, the writer to the Hebrews wrote: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10: 19, 20). This new life in Jesus has been purchased, for everyone who has been redeemed, by the shed blood of Christ on the cross. It is only by the "new and living way" that we can be saved. St. John the Divine has said of our crucified Lord in Revelation 5: 9, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seal thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation." Here again is proof that by Christ's shed blood we are healed—made right with God through the exercise of our faith and obedience in the blessed Son of God. Accordingly, by Christ's death on the cross the New Testament covenant was made complete for our salvation.

But the appalling thing is: multitudes of people in the world today are neglecting to accept this salvation. Then there is the tragic situation that there are millions more who know nothing of the gospel of Christ. There is no reasonable excuse, however, for the young and the old living in Christian lands not to come

to Christ and be redeemed. It is vitally important for all Bible teachers of Young people and Adult classes to stress the necessity of all students in their classes being true followers of Christ. The chief object of all Bible teaching is the bringing of the lost to Christ. Salvation of the world is the goal of Christianity.

CLASS DISCUSSION: In what is Christ the Mediator of the New Testament? How was the New Testament made effective by Christ's death? Why

is it necessary for sinners to turn to Christ for salvation when he has died to redeem them? The teacher should probably direct this discussion.

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
The One Sacrifice of the New Covenant Better than Many Sacrifices of the Old.—Heb. 9: 25-28; 7: 27; I Cor. 10: 11; Gal. 4: 4; I Pet. 3: 18; Gen. 3: 19; Ecl. 3: 20; II Cor. 5: 10; Rev. 20: 12, 13; Rom. 6: 10; Tit. 2: 13; I Pet. 2: 24; II Pet. 3: 12; I Jon. 3: 5.

Lesson Nine for Sunday, August 31, 1941

John Urges Christian Love

(I John 3 and 4)

Golden Text: Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. I John 3: 18.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

1 JOHN 3:

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1 JOHN 4:

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth

his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The time of the writing of this Epistle is not definitely known, but probably between A. D. 90 and 95.

Place: John's Epistles were probably written from the city of Ephesus.

Persons: St. John the Apostle and the brethren in Asia Minor to whom the letter was written.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To show that Christian love is to be made manifest toward God and man.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ch. 2: 9-11; Matt. 5: 21, 22.

T.—Rev. 21: 8; Jon. 3: 16; 15: 13.

W.—Eph. 5: 2, 25; Lu. 3: 11.

T.—Ch. 3: 10, 11, 23; 2: 4.

F.—Jon. 15: 12, 13; I Tim. 6: 16.

S.—Jas. 2: 13; Ch. 2: 4; 3: 17.

S.—Jon. 13: 34; 15: 12.

THE INTRODUCTION

The central theme of this lesson is love. The Apostle John laid emphasis upon this great Christian principle, showing that love had its origin in God, and that we should love one another as he has loved us. It should be an interesting and profitable study for the old and the young.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE OF HIS SALVATION

(I John 3: 14, 15)

John says, We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. The principle of sacred love is the basis upon which the apostle uses his statement of assurance of the Christian's salvation. Sincere love to his fellow men and to God is the foundation for the belief in eternal life; for Christ

has said, "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments" (St. John 14: 15). He also told his disciples, "If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (St. John 14: 23).

1. Passing from Death unto Life:

The passing from death unto life means that the sinner has repented of his sins, has been baptized in the blood of Christ, and maintains faith in Jesus as his Saviour. We are, according to the scriptures, by nature children of wrath and heirs of death; but our state towards another world is changed or altered by our acceptance of the provisions of the gospel of Christ. All who are guilty of sins before the Lord must seek forgiveness in order to be redeemed by the blood of Christ. The passing from this sinful state, which is the state of death, unto life in Christ Jesus is made through repentance, faith and baptism, and the Christian walk with God. In John's Gospel 3: 36 Jesus said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." Salvation is the happy change, or state of the human soul

after past transgressions have been blotted out.

When God's cleansing power has been applied to the heart of the sinner, and upon his meeting the terms of the gospel, he then becomes a new creature, a redeemed soul. New light and new life have entered his heart, and he knows he has been redeemed. He is assured of the happy change in his life. The apostle John says, "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Why should true Christians not know that they have passed from death unto the new life in Jesus? If they love God with all their heart, and their fellow men with a desire to live right before the world, Why then shouldn't they know that they are children of God? "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is one of the great commands of our Lord. Dr R. A. Torrey has said, "The nearer we keep to Jesus, the more will our life reflect the radiance of the new relationship." As we live in the body of the flesh, Satan the arch-enemy will continue to war against the new nature (Gal. 5: 17). But if the Christian falls into sin, through carelessness or weakness, he is to seek honestly and penitently forgiveness through Jesus Christ. It is true that the average intelligent minded individual knows when he is doing wrong in the sight of God, and he knows that he cannot be a child of God and act like a child of the Devil (Matt. 6: 24).

CLASS DISCUSSION: How may a Christian know that he is a child of God? How does an individual pass from death unto eternal life? How may the average person know when he is doing wrong?

II. THE PROOF OF SUPREME LOVE (I John 3: 16-18)

1. God's Love to Man:

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us:

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, verse 16. Christ became our sin-bearer. He suffered all that we might have eternal life through his shed blood on the cross. He was offered up as a ransom for our sins. He paid the price in the exercise of his gospel ministry unto the lost and the suffering, by the enduring of the buffetings and sharp criticisms of his bitter enemies, in his yearnings over Israel, and in his trial, bitter agony and death on the cross that the world might be redeemed. His life was lived and spent for the good of others. Such was proof of his supreme love for lost humanity. Every provision was made for the redemption of sinful men. God had great concern for lost souls, therefore, he was willing to make the supreme sacrifice of his only begotten Son that all men might be drawn unto him.

2. Duty of Christians:

We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Here is a duty enjoined, according to John, upon true followers of God. We are to stick to the faith, and, if need be, be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren in the kingdom work. Matthew Henry says the following on this point: "It must be, in the highest degree, so fervent as to make us willing to suffer even to death for the good of the church, for the safety and the salvation of the dear brethren." This is a duty which becomes Christians in showing their spirit of unity and co-operation for the cause of righteousness. The apostle Paul wrote the Philippian brethren in these words, "If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all" (Ch. 2: 7). People are to live lives of service, and not to manifest the selfish spirit toward others. True love will manifest itself in real Christians by their willingness to preform good deeds of true service unto others.

3. The Lack of Love for Our Fellow men:

But whoso hath the world's goods and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? verse 17. Here is expressed the opposite, or the contrast to real love for the brethren. The apostle is saying that, if a person of material blessings fail to help his brother who is in need, How does the love of God abide in him? Is it not contrary to the teachings of the Bible? How can he love God truly, and at the same time stand idly by and allow his brother to suffer for the lack of assistance? How can, may we ask, any portion of God's love be in a so-called Christian who has failed to show compassion for a brother in need? "Shutting up his compassion": the metaphor here is locking the chamber of the heart instead of flinging it wide open and lavishing its treasures."—Tarbell's *Teachers' Guide*. "True love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13: 10).

CLASS DISCUSSION: How did God show his great love for humanity? What is the duty of Christians concerning their attitude toward the brethren? What did John have to say about the lack of love to our fellow men?

III. THE BLESSEDNESS OF LOVE (I John 4: 7-16)

In these verses the apostle John has expressed a strong fervent exhortation for the manifestation of love. He said, **Let us love one another: for love is of God.** Paul said in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (v. 13).

1. The Origin of Love:

God is the foundation, the author, of love. His love for mankind is expressed all through the Bible; it is the sum of

his law and the gospel wherever found in Holy Writ. Everyone who possesses in his heart this great principle of love is born of God. He knows God. The Spirit of love is the Spirit of God, and the new nature imparted to the redeemed of God is the offspring of this heavenly love. God manifested his great love to the world by sending his only begotten Son into the world to redeem lost souls. Thus he has shown his matchless love to mankind both in material and spiritual ways. He has made ample provision in the material universe for all of man's temporal needs. Nothing is lacking. He has also given man a plan, a chance to be redeemed for condemnation and eternal destruction through the spiritual realm which he has provided in his only begotten Son. It was because of his supreme love for us that he has made all these provisions for our earthly comforts and eternal happiness. His love never faileth, for God is love. The fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5: 22). No one has the right to deny that true love originated with God himself.

2. Mutual Love One for Another:

He that loveth not knoweth not God. verse 8a. "God's love for us lays upon us the obligation of loving one another for in this way we show our love for God. God's presence cannot be seen, but it can be appreciated by its results: where love is seen in man, it proves the presence of God's Spirit within him."—Tarbell's *Teachers' Guide*. Dr. R. A. Torrey says, "Much that is called love is not love at all, but selfishness."

It is reasonable to say we ought to love one another when God first loved us. He has set for us the example and we should manifest it toward others. There is need for but little comment here, but there is great need for more actual living in our daily lives of this brotherly love one toward another. There should be more teaching and preaching, both

from the Sunday School and the pulpit, of this Christian duty. Christian leaders everywhere should not neglect this important obligation. It is a challenge to every minister, teacher and lay leader of the church. For God's love to abide in our hearts, and for our love to abide in others, we are to manifest this love by our Christian works both toward God and man. Love begets love, and he who loves the more in spirit and in deed gets the greater joy.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Discuss the origin of love. Why should we manifest love one toward another? Discuss the minister and the religious teacher's duty concerning the principle of love toward God and man.

IV. THERE IS NO FEAR WHERE LOVE IS MANIFESTED (I John 4: 17-21)

There is no fear manifested where mutual and sincere love is abiding. The scriptures tell us that "perfect love casteth out fear." I am not afraid of any harm coming to me from my fellow man as long as mutual love exists between us. So long as we love God and keep his commandments there is no need of fear of him. He is on our side and has promised to be with us so long as we obey him. So long as I have the utmost love and respect for my neighbor, I will not seek to do him any harm. He can trust me. And as long as he maintains love and respect for me, he will not want to do me any harm. When there is perfect love and harmony between individuals, or groups of individuals, little should anyone of them entertain fear of others. The apostles loved the brethren, and little did they fear danger or harm from them.

1. Boldness in the Day of Judgment:

Mutual and sincere love produce as-

surance and boldness in the day of judgment. He who is strong in the Lord shall be able to stand in the day of temptation, for his faith and trust in God will bear him up under fiery trials. The great test of the Christian, therefore, is his love both for God and man. It will make him able to stand boldly and courageously for the right. It will give him the assurance of being able to stand in the eternal judgment. True love in the heart of the individual will instill reverence for God and respect for human rights.

As physical strength and mental power give poise and bearing to human activity, so Christian love removes fear and establishes right relationships in the human heart for God and man. It is the balance wheel which controls and regulates the heart impulses of the true lovers of God and man. Love is the strengthening and the drawing power of God which gives the human heart courage and patience in times of great testing and discouragements. Accordingly, he who loves God should also love his neighbor. But if a person loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? The great commandment is that we should love our neighbor as ourselves.

CLASS DISCUSSION: How can perfect love cast out fear? Of whom should we be afraid? How may perfect love make us bold and courageous? Can people love God with a sincere heart and not love their fellow men?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: Faith the Overcoming Principle of Life.—I John 5: 1-21; Matt. 11: 30; Jon. 14: 15, 21, 23; 16: 33; I Cor. 15: 57; Rom. 8: 16; Gal. 4: 6.

Lesson Ten, for Sunday, September 7, 1941

Revelation: A Message to Persecuted Churches

(Rev. 1 to 3)

Golden Text: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
Rev. 2: 10.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

REVELATION 2:

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and has found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast that thou hatest

the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The Revelation of St. John the Divine was written about A. D. 96.

Place: It was written on the Isle of Patmos.

Person: John the Apostle.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To teach that all churches are to be not only faithful to Christ in theory and practice but also spiritually alive in order to meet God's divine approval.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Rev. 16: 20; II Cor. 11: 13; II Pct. 2: 1.

T.—Matt. 21: 41, 43;; Rev. 22: 2.

W.—Matt. 11: 15; Rom. 2: 17.

T.—I Tim. 6: 18; Jams. 2: 5.

F.—Rev. 3: 11; Matt. 10: 22; 24: 13.

S.—Jas. 1: 12.

S.—Rev. 13: 9; 20: 14; 21: 8.

THE INTRODUCTION

In this lesson the scripture reference

covers the Seven Churches of Asia, as given in Revelation chapters two and three. As the printed text gives only the first two churches; namely, the one in Ephesus and the other in Smyrna, the lesson discussion has been confined to these two churches. Space would not allow a treatment of the other five in this discussion. Those churches have been mentioned for additional home study at the end of the lesson.

The student will find in this study of the first two churches the commendations, the censures and the exhortations which the apostle John gave to those brethren. While he praised them for some good works, he, on the other hand, rebuked them for their neglect of other things. He, nevertheless, encouraged them to go forward in the name of Christ. The gospel truths as applied to these churches will also apply today to many of the modern churches.

I. JOHN'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (Rev. 2: 1-7)

During the time when the apostle John wrote his sacred writings, Ephesus was the greatest commercial city of the province. Pliny, the Roman soldier and writer, called it "the eye of Asia." This city had in that day a fine harbor at the mouth of the River Cayster. The apostle Paul, be it remembered, had a wonderful experience at Ephesus while preaching there. (Read The Acts, chapter nineteen.)

1. John Commends the Church:

The church at Ephesus, which had become famous, had been planted by the apostle Paul. It had been watered and governed later by John himself who had had his residence there for sometime. In the second and third chapters of Revelation, Christ directed the words of St. John the Divine as he wrote to the Seven Churches of Asia. The church at

Ephesus is the first one mentioned. The first thought is that of commendation given to this church. John wrote. **I know thy works and thy labor**, verse 2a. I know the trials through which you have gone, and the toil and patience which you have shown for the sake of the gospel. I know your hardships, persecutions and struggles which have come upon you. I know, too, that you cannot bear them that are evil, seeking admittance among you as false prophets. Matthew Henry says, "Some had risen up in this church that pretended to be not ordinary ministers, but apostles; and their pretensions had been examined but found to be vain and false."

"You have tested them who tried to pass themselves off as apostles, but are not. You proved them liars. You have patiently borne burdens for my sake and have not grown weary."—Tarbell's Teachers' Guide.

Consequently, in this sense Christ is commending the church; that is, the ministers and the members, for their labor and patience in their watchcare of the church. He commends them especially for their casting out the false prophets who had sought entrance into their midst. God is always ready to commend every day's work and every good deed performed by his followers for the ongoing of the gospel of Christ. God has promised in his holy Word that the labors of his faithful servants shall not be in vain in the Lord. But, while the church at Ephesus had had some good qualities, it had reached, on the other hand, a place in its history in which it was on the downward grade. This was unfortunate, nevertheless, it was true. Many churches today fall into the same plight over a period of years.

2. They Had Left their First Love:

This was a condition which brought censure upon them. The spiritual life

of the church had become weakened; hence, there was quite evident the loss of their first love for the cause of Christ. When spiritual fires once burning brightly in the souls of men and women grow weak, then the love for the church and its cause becomes less and less effective in the community in which the church is located. The whole community feels its dampening effect. Their love both for God and for one another had, in the case of these Ephesian brethren, become very weak, and Christ saw the bad results which it had upon the whole church.

He said through his servant John, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love, verse 4. I am moved in resentment by your having lost your first love for the church of the loving God. Why should you who have been redeemed by the blood-offering of Christ so conduct yourselves as to provoke the Lord to anger? Why should you allow yourselves to become weak and cold as a church toward the One who has redeemed you from your sins? Your course of neglect and loss of the spiritual fires of love is not only perilous to the church, but also grievous to the heavenly Father. You deserve censure and sharp reprimand for your neglect and carelessness. You are guilty before the Lord. Such decay and declension of your former love and zeal for Christ is shocking, and it therefore provokes divine rebuke and censure. Had you kept your affection alive and active toward Christ you would not have committed such a sin.

Even today many church people who once were very zealous and active in the cause of righteousness do provoke the Lord because of their falling away from their first love for the church. It is a fact that this same sin which the brethren in the Ephesus church committed is being repeated by church members in many churches over the country.

They show their first love for a while for God and his great cause of righteousness, and then they lose interest or become provoked over some insignificant matter, and quit the church. Their first love has been swallowed up by their narrow peevishness and selfishness. Love for God has been choked out. It is a known fact that for church people to become indifferent and cold toward the cause of Christ means the grieving of our blessed Redeemer and the inviting of his displeasure. (Read Heb. 6: 4-12.) As a son or a daughter, who have generously received and abided by for a time the good instructions of their parents, later on depart from such teachings, and grieve bitterly father and mother because of their transgressions, just so, churchmembers who have grown cold and indifferent toward the cause of righteousness grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Christ wants his followers to remain ever faithful and true to him.

3. John's Exhortation:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith, verse 7a. Following his words of censure and rebuke to the Ephesian brethren for their loss of love, the apostle exhorts them to give strict heed to the Holy Spirit. Though they had grown cold, and had wandered from God, John calls them back to their Christian duty. He admonished them to hear the voice of God, and to return to their first works. What were the "first works" may we ask? St. Matthew in chapter 6: 33 said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." And Paul says in Galatians 5: 22, 23, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Dr. R. A. Torrey says, "Removing one's candlestick means that a church loses its witnessing power. It may continue to exist but to no definite purpose."

When a Christian has become negligent and indifferent toward his church and the cause of Christ, it is time for God's ministers to exhort and arouse, if possible, him to his duty. Negative Christians need to be stirred to a sense of their religious obligations to the cause of Christ. This is what the apostle John did to the Ephesian brethren. If they were to expect the blessings of God to be continued upon them, they were to hold fast to the first principles. In this matter they were shown that they should return to their duty and to do the "first works."

4. The Promise to Overcomers:

John assured them that the reward would be certain if they would be overcomers for the Lord. They must work for him. He said, **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God,** verse 7b. God has promised the heavenly reward to those who will be overcomers for his glory. They must work; they must keep the light of the gospel shining in their hearts; and they must radiate it unto others. The lost are to be saved, and God's messengers have the charge of taking it to them.

In our own day we who are Christians are to be overcomers in the name of Jesus. We are to stand for the right, uphold the gospel and be living examples of the Christian faith. We are to administer to the poor and needy, call upon the sick, plead with the wayward to turn from their sins, and to give freely of our substance for the ongoing of the gospel. We are to live the Christian life day by day. In this way we will be overcomers for the glory of God. The promised reward will, then, be sure if we will trust him to the end.

CLASS DISCUSSION: For what did John commend the church at Ephesus? How had the Ephesian brethren left their

"first love"? What was John's exhortation to them? What were they to do to be able to receive the heavenly promise?

II. CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA

The city of Smyrna was fifty miles north of Ephesus in Asia Minor (or Turkey of today), and a rival of that city. It was and is a seaport. It is still known by the same name. It is no longer, however, "distinguished for its Christian church being overrun with Mahomedism."—M. Henry.

1. No Word of Censure, but of Commendation:

In contrast with the church at Ephesus John had no word of censure for the brethren at Smyrna. There was no summons to repentance, as in the cause of the church at Ephesus. John wrote them these words: **I know thy works and tribulations and poverty,** verse 9. I know what you have endured for the cause of the gospel. I know what you have accomplished, for you are rich. Rich not in material things but in spiritual blessings. You have been overcomers for the cause of righteousness. You are to be commended. You have been humble in spirit but rich in grace. Their outward poverty of material things was set off by their spiritual riches of heavenly things. Let us note in comparison here what Jesus said to the multitude in Luke 6: 20, "Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God." Poverty makes the gracious soul humble, but material riches often cause the proud heart to be exalted.

It is true, many who are rich in temporal blessings are poor in spiritual things. Some are rich in faith and good works, but have very little of this world's goods. But they are to be happier because of their rich fellowship with God. Is it not the fact that spiritual riches are usually the reward of

great diligence? We think it is. The one who pays the price of living the overcoming-life for the cause of righteousness will certainly be rewarded in the end.

2. Blasphemers:

I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, verse 9b. Christ well knew the pretenders of religion among them—those who counted themselves to be the only peculiar covenant-people of God. They call themselves Jews, but they are the **synagogue of Satan**. Note here, as Christ has set up his church in the world to direct humanity in the right way, so Satan has his synagogues of false worshippers for the purpose of drawing human souls into the ways of the world. His agents are the blasphemers of Christ and the Christian church. They are ever seeking to uproot and to destroy the seeds of Christianity in the hearts of Christ's followers. Matthew Henry says:

"Those assemblies which are set up in opposition to the truths of the gospel, and which promote and propagate damnable errors—those which are up in opposition to the purity and spirituality of gospel worship, and which promote and propagate the vain inventions of men and rites and ceremonies which never entered into the thoughts of God's—and those which are set up to revile and persecute the true worship and worshippers of God,—these are all synagogues of Satan: he presides over them, he works in them, his interests are served by them, and he receives a horrid homage and honor from them."

But John wrote the brethren at Smyrna not to be afraid of those things which thou shalt suffer, verse 10a. Be not afraid of the enemy, but trust in God. Adhere to the teachings of Christ and withstand Satan and his synagogue followers. It is true some of you shall be cast in prison by the Devil himself to

be tried and tested. Christ told his disciples that they might expect trials and persecutions as they labored in the gospel ministry. But they were to be overcomers. Today people of God can expect to be tried and tempted by the evil influences existing about them. But they, too, are to be overcomers for the Lord.

3. An Exhortation to Faithfulness:

The apostle urged the church at Smyrna to be faithful to the end. The crown is promised upon the exercise of one's faithfulness to the cause of righteousness. It is a great cardinal principle of Christianity. The brethren at Smyrna had done a good work, but they were urged to go on in the faith and good works of the Master. There was to be no let-down in their faith and Christian works, but a continuous manifestation of faithfulness to the cause for which Christ had died. Many people have failed in matters pertaining to the temporal as well as to the spiritual life because they gave up too soon and failed to go forward with a zeal to be victorious in the end.

Things that are worthwhile are most often accomplished through sacrifice and persistent effort. Hence, the apostle exhorted the brethren at Smyrna to fight on the good fight of faith until the crowning victory should be won. Then, there would be prepared for them the great reward of eternal life. I will give thee a crown of life, said Christ. You shall be graciously paid for all your trials, privations and tribulations, and sacrifices for my name's sake. Your duty is to remain ever faithful and true to the end, following him who is the Author and Finisher of your faith. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Lu. 16: 10).

CLASS DISCUSSION: In what respect did the church at Smyrna differ

from the one at Ephesus? Who were the blasphemers John had reference to in this study? Why did the apostle tell the brethren not to be afraid of the blasphemers? Why was the church at Smyrna exhorted to be faithful? What

promise did Christ hold out for the faithful ones?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY:
The Messages to the Last Five Churches of Asia.—Rev. 2: 12-29; 3: 1-19.

Lesson Eleven for Sunday, September 14, 1941

The Eternal God, the Source of Help

(Rev. 7: 9-17)

Golden Text: Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and which is, and is to come. Rev. 4: 8.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

REVELATION 7:

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God.

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered,

saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat:

17 For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: The book of Revelation was written probably about A. D. 95.

Place: The Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea.

Person: John the Apostle.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(I). To teach vital truths concerning divine unfolding of some of the characteristics of life in heaven for the redeemed.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Rev. 4: 4; 5: 9; Rom. 11: 25.

T.—Isa. 43:11; Jer. 3: 23; Hos. 13: 4.

W.—Rev. 5: 13, 14.

T.—Isa. 1: 18; Heb. 9: 14.

F.—I Jon. 1: 7; Isa. 4: 5, 6.

S.—Ps. 121: 6; Isa. 49: 10.

S.—Ps. 23: 1; 36: 8. Jon. 10: 11, 14.

THE INTRODUCTION

Our lesson today gives us a wonderful scene of praise and adoration of the saints and the angels before the throne of God. The apostle John here pictures the joys in heaven as witnessed by those who had come out of great tribulation, and had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

Those who study this lesson with a view of appreciating God's word should be greatly encouraged, as followers of Christ, to go forth with new zeal and new hope in the service of the Master. A greater willingness should be aroused in the heart to be willing to bear greater tribulation for the cause of righteousness and the crown of glory that shall not pass away.

I. THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN

(Rev. 7: 9-12)

In verses nine through twelve we have a picture given by John of something happening in heaven with the great multitude standing before the throne of God.

1. The Multitude Offering up Praises:

Let us note first the great multitude of all nations, kindreds and people and tongues. It was too great for man to count the number of people in the throng. They stood before the throne, and before the Lamb. "They are Gentiles, are 'out of all nations, and kindreds and people and tongues.' They have immediate access to God, they 'stand' (i. e., are there in a place of acceptance and recognition) 'before the throne.' This throne is the throne of God in heaven (ch. 4: 3-11)."—Dr. R. A. Torrey. This multitude stood, dressed in white robes and with palms in their hands, before the great Creator of Heaven, and before the Mediator who is the Redeemer of their souls.

Note, they sang songs of praises to God and the Lamb. Great rejoicing was shown in heaven by their singing before the Great White Throne. Their being arrayed in white is the Symbol of purity. Having palms in their hands is the symbol of victory over sin and Satan. Singing before the throne and in the presence of God is the symbol of happiness of those who have been overcomers of the arch-enemy of this world. They have fought the good fight of faith; they have not given up the conflict with the Evil One; and they had finished with great rejoicing their course victoriously. Great joy comes to the hearts of men when they have won the victory over hard tasks and serious difficulties, and have achieved success, whether it be in the realm of material accomplishments or spiritual blessings. There is a song deep down in their hearts that cause to arise within the soul gladness and great rejoicing. It is a picture of the happy state in heaven.

In setting forth the Parable of the Lost Sheep Jesus said, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Lu. 15: 7). This heavenly multitude gave all the honor for their salvation to God and to the Lamb, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

2. The Angels about the Throne:

There was present also a host of angels around about the throne. They were standing, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, verse 11b. Here is humility, reverence and praise expressed by the angels who worshipped the living God with the saints. "Behold the most excellent of all the creatures, who never sinned, who are before him continually, not only covering their faces, but falling down on their

faces before the Lord! What humility then, and what profound reverence, become us vile, frail creatures when we come into the presence of God."—**Matthew Henry's Commentary**. Think how humble and obedient Christians should be unto the Lord who has provided every essential for this life and the life to come!

This heavenly host of angels gave consent to the praises of the multitude of saints, and expressed their **amens** to them in their great rejoicing. There is harmony in heaven between the angels and the saints of God. Likewise, there should be harmony, peace and love here on earth between all of God's children. Note how the angels added more of their praises by saying, **Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.** Remember, the angels acknowledged God's wonderful powers, and showed by their praises that he should be glorified throughout all eternity for all these things.

In commenting on this picture of the saints and the angels about the throne of God, Dr. Martha Tarbell says, "This reminds us of the beautiful story in Luke's Gospel of the first Christmas: the Herald Angel makes the announcement and the chorus replies in a song of praise. We have the same idea in the **Tersanctus (Thrice Holy)**, written many centuries ago by an unknown composer who must have had our passage in mind, when he wrote,

"Therefore with angels and arch-angels, and with all company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, ever more praising thee and saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of glory, glory be to thee, O Lord most High."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Who are the multitude offering up praises to God?

What do the songs, the white robes and the palm branches symbolize? Tell what part the angels took in this scene. How does this show harmony in heaven? What should be the attitude of all Christians one toward another? Tell the story of the first Christmas as described in Luke's Gospel (Luke, chapter two).

II. WHO THE GREAT MULTITUDE BEFORE THE THRONE WERE (Rev. 7: 13-17)

We have been given in these verses a form of dialogue. Realizing that he was writing in symbols, John the apostle gives here an explanation for fear that some individuals might not understand the meaning of his message. The Bible is a book full of symbols, mysteries and prophecies which are difficult for the majority of people to definitely understand. But here, through question and answer, the meaning has been made more plain for the average person.

1. The Question:

What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? This question which was asked by one of the elders was not for his own information, but for John's instruction, so one commentator says. Note that there are two parts to the question; namely, who they were and from whence they had come.

God has told us who they were, for he has explained it through **one of the elders**. The elder said, **These are they which came out of great tribulation.** "They had not only passed through tribulation, as all believers shall, but they had passed through 'tribulation,' that is the time of tribulation that is coming upon this earth after the rapture of the church, when the anti-Christ will be fully manifested."—**Dr. R. A. Torrey**. They had been reviled and persecuted by wicked men. They had been tempted and tried by Satan himself. Yes, they had

borne their own troubles, hardships and disappointments while on earth. They had suffered the loss of loved ones, endured imprisonments and the pain of death. But they had won the crown of eternal life through the experience of much patience and great faith, and had thus become overcomers of sin and Satan. The way was hard but the reward was great. Their tribulations were many and severe, but they did not separate themselves from the love of God.

2. White Robes:

They washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. verse 14b. The white robe here is the symbol of purity; hence these saints of God had been made pure and clean by the blood of the Lamb. Their sins had been forgiven by the crucified Christ. It is not the shed blood of Christian martyrs that cleanses their souls and prepares them for eternity, but the blood of the Lamb shed on Calvary's Cross that cleanses and redeems the souls of men. It is the Redeemer's blood only that makes the robes of the saints white and clean. Not every richly dressed individual today, possessing the best apparel that money can buy, is clean in heart and wearing the white robe of righteousness. No, by no means. But there are some whose garments are threadbare and torn who have on their spiritual robes that are white and clean. They can stand, as these saints, before the throne of God, ready to sing his praises in an humble way. Such have washed their robes—have been forgiven of their sins—and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason the saints were before the throne, singing hymns of praise unto the Lord.

Both the young and the old should derive a great lesson here from this study. Each student of the Sunday School should apply this wonderful truth of God's word to his heart, and so live as

to be able to join the saints in heaven when they are called to pass from this life into the great beyond. Mere knowledge of the scriptures will not suffice, but our robes must be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Christ's shed blood on the cross must be applied to our hearts before we can be assured of eternal salvation.

3. Hunger and Thirst no More:

They shall hunger and thirst no more. John tells us that there shall be freedom from hunger and thirst and heat. The heart's desires, and toils and troubles of life of the flesh shall be over. God's saints shall be free from all want and the sense of want. Human anxiety shall then be over. They will experience no sickness nor pain. They shall never be scorched by the heat of the sun any more. The saints shall know no fatigue, no weariness of mind and body. The apostle has pictured here the happy state of the saints about the throne of God. They shall be ever happy, and in the love and guidance of the heavenly Father. The great promise is: "To him that overcometh shall I grant to sit down with me on my throne."

4. He Shall Feed Them:

The Lamb shall feed them upon the spiritual manna of heaven. He shall lead them into living waters. He shall grant unto them every thing that shall be pleasant and refreshing to their souls. Therefore, they shall hunger and thirst no more for anything. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Then, they shall witness the joys of heaven as the angels of God. All earthly sorrows will be removed by the ushering in of the heavenly bliss into their souls. They shall be joyously received by the heavenly Father as true children of the King. Thus, God will deal with his faithful ones as a tender and loving father, who upon finding his dear children in tears

and great grief, comforts them by smoothing down their brow, and turning their sorrows into rejoicings.

The tired and weary-worn Christians should observe with great consolation this beautiful picture of John of the saints in heaven, and take new courage and new hope. Matthew Henry says, "This should moderate the Christian's sorrow in his present state, and support him under all troubles of it; for those that sow in tears shall reap in joy; and those that now go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing in their sheaves with them."

CLASS DISCUSSION: Who were the multitude before the throne? What tribulation had these saints passed through? Discuss their white robes. By whose blood were they made white? Describe the happy condition of the saints in heaven. Who shall look after the saints in heaven, and how shall they be cared for? What hope may all Christians take from the study of this heavenly scene which John pictured here?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Test of True Christian Service.—Matt. 25: 14-30; Lu. 19: 12-27; Heb. 12: 2; I Pet. 1: 8; Jon. 15: 2.

Lesson Twelve for Sunday, September 21, 1941

Overcoming the Adversary

(Rev. 12 to 15)

Golden Text: And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Rev. 12: 11.

THE PRINTED TEXT

(Authorized Version)

REVELATION 12:

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

REVELATION 15:

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: About A. D. 95.

Place: The Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea.

Person: John the Apostle.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

- (1). To teach the reality of heaven and the goodness of God.
- (2). To show that Satan is the enemy of God and man.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Rev. 20: 2; Dan. 10: 13, 21; 12: 1.

T.—Rev. 9: 1; 20: 2, 3; Gen. 3: 1, 4.

W.—Lu. 10: 18; Jon. 12: 31.

T.—Lu. 14: 26; Rom. 8: 33, 34, 37.

F.—Rev. 8: 13; 10: 6; 18: 20; Isa. 49: 13.

S.—Rev. 13: 15-17; 14: 2; 21: 8.

S.—Isa. 66: 23; Jer. 10: 7.

THE INTRODUCTION

This lesson opens with a conflict in heaven between the archangel Michael and Satan who is cast down to the earth. Then there is the heavenly host that sing praises to God for the salvation of the saints. The scene is striking.

Satan on earth is classified as the accuser of the brethren, the Church of Christ, and is represented as the great trouble maker for the whole world. The study bears out the fact that Satan, the great Adversary, is to be feared and avoided by everyone. On the other hand, praises and honor are to be given to God for his wonderful power.

I. SATAN'S DEFEAT IN HEAVEN (Rev. 12: 7-9)

We have here a conflict in heaven between Michael and his angels on the side of right, and Satan, the old dragon, on the other side, representing the forces of evil. Michael is champion of righteousness, whereas Satan is the champion of evil. The one stands for all that is good and holy, while the other represents everything that is bad and sinful. The

conflict was war in heaven between these two opposing forces which were battling for supremacy, one over the other.

Satan and his angels were defeated in this conflict in heaven, and were cast down upon the earth. The side of righteousness was victorious in this combat. It was through the atoning death of Christ, the slain Lamb on the Cross of Calvary, that this victory was won by the arch-angel Michael in heaven over Satan. The power of Christ and of the Holy Spirit prevailed over this great Adversary. Satan's being cast down to the earth carries with it a twofold sense; namely, (1) it is expressive of the loss of his dignity and power; (2) the earth is the place of his future operations in his struggle against God. His warfare is constantly going on here upon earth in serious conflict with the forces of righteousness. Having been cast out of heaven, he is losing no time on earth in spreading his power and influence among all classes of people. With his cunning craftiness he is making use of all his satanic power to draw people from the paths of righteousness unto his way of destruction and eternal condemnation.

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, verse 10a. "This 'great voice' is characteristic of all the heavenly utterances (cf. ch. 5: 2; 6: 1, 10; 16: 17, etc.). The personality of the speaker is not indicated. From the following chorus the voice would seem to proceed from many inhabitants of heaven."—*The Pulpit Commentary*. According to the message of the voice, Now is come sal-

vation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of Christ. Such was the divine witness from God. The saints in heaven were able to celebrate, according to this voice, the supremacy of God's power over the Devil and his host of wicked servants. This "salvation of God" is that eternal power which proceeds from him and is given by Christ unto those who seek forgiveness of their sins at the throne of grace. Here is seen how God has shown himself to be a mighty God. Also Christ has shown himself to be a strong and mighty Savior of lost souls. Praise and honor are to be ascribed to God and to his Son for the plan of salvation.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Ask a member of the class to discuss the war in heaven between Michael and Satan. After the conflict where has Satan been operating with all his satanic power? What did the great voice in heaven proclaim? What is necessary for people to be able to be overcomers of the evil one?

II. THE ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN

(Rev. 12: 10-12)

Note the description given in these verses of Satan. He is called the **accuser of the brethren**. He accused them day and night before God. He was trouble maker of the worst kind. This old Adversary appeared before God as the bitter opponent of the church of Christ, and brought accusations against it. Remember, he accused old Job. He accused God's servant Joshua. He is today accusing those who are trying to live right, and those who are taking a stand against his cunning devices to deceive people. May we take heed, therefore, that we give him no chance to tempt us beyond that which we can bear. But let us commit our cause to Christ who is our Advocate, and the One who will guard us, if we will let him, against this vile accuser.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, verse 11a. Not by their might nor power did they overcome Satan, but by Christ Jesus. Man is powerless to save himself from the shackles of sin and Satan. He is too weak to overcome the Devil by his own strength. But by the application of the shed blood of Christ to the wicked heart the sinner can become an overcomer for God and righteousness. Thus, the victory is to be gained through the blood of the Lamb. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13). It means that we are to put our faith and trust in Jesus. He is our Mediator who will safely guide us through this life of toil and testing. We must choose him as our Counselor and Pilot while we journey down the road of life. It is he who will lead us to victory by his strong arm. Let us, therefore, make him our chief Captain, so that when the storms and tempests of life are about us, he will safely pilot us into the haven of eternal rest.

Note again the words of the voice: **Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you**, verse 12a. While those in heaven had cause to rejoice because Satan was cast out, those on the earth have reason to fear Satan's great wrath against them. "His wrath, kindled by his ejection from heaven, is the greater because of the comparative shortness of his reign on earth. This 'short season' is the period of the world's existence from the advent of Satan till the final judgment. It is short in comparison with eternity, and it is frequently thus described in the New Testament (Rom. 9: 28; I Cor. 7: 29; ch. 3: 11, etc.)."—The Pulpit Commentary.

Since the fall of Adam in the garden of Eden, Satan has been the great trouble maker among men in the earth. He has been using every conceivable device to draw mankind down to the depths of ut-

ter ruin and despair. Men and women have fallen under his power in all ages, and from all ranks of life. He has great wrath, possessing great power to deceive oftentimes the very best of people. He has made the earth a place of crime, greed, deception, fornication, evil environment, etc. His deceptive power affects the old and the young, and draws them down to want, shame, sorrow and eternal condemnation. All who walk in his ways and follow after his devices cannot promise themselves anything but trouble and disappointment in this life and the life to come. Such are the evil conditions here upon earth today, and it behooves everyone to withstand this old Serpent by accepting the Christ and following him in the paths of righteousness. It is to be observed that Satan's malice is chiefly set against the servants of God, but that he is an enemy and a hater of all mankind everywhere. His enmity is against God and righteousness, purity and correct living, honesty and goodness in the lives of individuals. In this sense his wrath is against all the earth.

CLASS DISCUSSION: In what sense is Satan the accuser of the "brethren?" By what means are people able to overcome Satan. How did Paul overcome the evil forces of the world as he went about preaching the word of God? What is meant by "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth"? What must people do to withstand the wrath of Satan?

III. PICTURE OF THE CHURCH IN GLORY

(Rev. 15: 2-4)

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, verse 2a. The fire is an emblem of purity—that which cleanses or destroys. "The sea was like glass either because of its pure transparent appearance, or on account of its consistency."—*The Pulpit Commentary*. In this connection Dr. R. A. Torrey says,

"The sea of glass mingled with fire is a symbol of a glorious purification permeated with the glorious, vital power of the Holy Spirit." It was a scene of God's glory in heaven. In chapter four, verse six it is given thus: "A sea of glass like unto crystal." The thought to be considered here is: the purity, brightness and shininess of heaven, reflecting God's glory about the throne.

For reference to the full description of the beast and his image, the class is requested to read chapter 13. Concerning the terrible trials mentioned in the chapter, many souls will come through victoriously over sin and Satan. They will take their place in heaven about the throne and the sea of glass. They will be the overcomers of the old dragon. These will have in their hands the harps of God. The harps mentioned here are the symbols of perfect harmony in heaven. Concerning the song of Moses, it was probably the one recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, verses one to twenty-one. The song of the Lamb is probably the one recorded in Revelation, chapter five. The singers are the redeemed who praise God for his wonderful power of redemption. They ascribe justice, truth and honor to God as the King of all saints.

The great host of heaven broke forth in a song of gratitude and triumph, making acknowledgment of the holiness of God and the greatness of his works. C. R. Erdman has said, "It is not only the song of Moses. It is also the song of the Lamb. It is the song of complete redemption, the song of the Universal Church. And as the seer listens to the song it swells into an anthem which celebrates the final judgment, the unlimited power, the universal sway of the King of kings."

Who shall fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? Here is a question addressed to God by the singers in heaven. Who shall fear the Lord but those who

are condemned for their transgressions? Who shall glorify his great name but those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb? God only is holy and to be revered and glorified for his lovingkindness and tender mercies toward all mankind. His judgments are true and are made manifest in the scriptures. God has shown his acts of justice and righteousness toward his people. Let us note here that there are three outstanding characteristics of God: (1) He is holy by divine nature; (2) his dominion extends over all the universe; and (3) the righteousness of his acts cannot be justly questioned by the mind of man. One commentator has said concerning this point, "Thy deeds of righteousness shall be acted out toward the nations, both in the publication of the gospel, and in the destruction of thine enemies."

Fear in the heart of the individual is the opposite to joy and praise. A person who loves God and seeks to keep his commandments has no need of fear, for he has a sense of love and appreciation for the heavenly Father. It is characteristic, on the other hand, for an individual to fear his bitter enemy because some harm may be visited upon him by that enemy. Satan is the enemy of God and man, and is ever seeking to uproot

and destroy all good in the world. But God is the friend of man, and is ever seeking to guide him aright and to bless him both temporally and spiritually. Therefore, we are to love God and fear the Devil. We are to live obedient lives unto him, and shun the cunning devices of the Devil. We are to praise God for his divine providence which he has made for man's every need, but we are at the same time to oppose Satan because of his evil purposes first to deceive and then to destroy us. Who should fear the Lord? Those who continue in sin, for they shall be punished. Their only way of escape is to turn to the Lord and be saved. Then they will have a right to praise him for their salvation.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Describe the scene which John pictures here of the sea of glass mingled with fire? What is its significance? Discuss the singing of the host of heaven. What are the three characteristics of God as discussed in this topic? In what sense should a person fear God, or praise God? Why should an individual fear Satan?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Fall of Babylon.—Rev. 14:8-14; 18:2, 21; 19:2; Isa. 21:9; Jer. 51:8; Ps. 75:8; I Cor. 15:18; I Thess. 4:16; II Thess. 1:7.

Lesson Thirteen for Sunday, September 28, 1941

The Fulfilment of History: The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21 and 22)

Golden Text: He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. Rev. 21:7.

THE PRINTED TEXT (Authorized Version)

REVELATION 21:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of

heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and

showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

THE SETTING OF THE LESSON

Time: About A. D. 95.

Place: The Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea.

Person: John the Apostle.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

(1). To teach that eternal rest in the Holy City is a sufficient reward for every suffering which men endure on earth for Christ's sake.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Rev. 20: 11; Isa. 65: 17; I Pet. 3: 13.

T.—Rev. 3: 12; Gal. 4: 46; Heb. 11: 10; 12: 22.

W.—I Cor. 15: 26, 54; Heb. 8: 10.

T.—Rev. 1: 10; 17: 3; 22: 5.

F.—Isa. 60: 19, 20; 66: 12.

S.—Rev. 22: 5; Isa. 60: 11, 12.

S.—Zech. 14: 7; Isa. 35: 8; Joel 3: 17; Phil. 4: 3.

THE INTRODUCTION

In the verses covering this lesson, the

apostle John has given us glimpses of the Holy City in the glory world. He has pictured the glorious assurance which shall finally be granted unto all who have made the supreme sacrifice during their earthly existence for the cause of Christ Jesus.

He has given a wonderful description of the New Jerusalem, revealing the extent of the Holy City, and the meanings of the foundations of the wall about it, of the gates and the angels, and of the river of life. He tells us that some from all nations will be admitted into this Holy Place, and that they shall experience eternal happiness with the Father and the Lamb.

I. JOHN'S VISION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (Rev. 21: 1-7)

1. General Characteristics:

The apostle John tells us that he saw a new heaven and a new earth. This vision is a new or renewed universe which the apostle saw, so some of the commentators believe. Tarbell says, "It is a renewed universe which the seer envisages. The center of life in this restored earth is the ideal city of New Jerusalem, of which it is distinctly said that it was seen to descend out of heaven from God." William Milligan says, "The fact, . . . , that the heavens and the earth here spoken of are 'new,' does not imply that they are now first brought into being. They may be the old heavens and the old earth; but they have a new aspect, a new character, adapted to a new end." "By the new earth we may understand a new state for the bodies of men, as well as a new heaven for their souls."—Matthew Henry. The apostle Peter tells us that the earth will be destroyed by fire, which is symbol of God's judgment (II Pet. 3: 10-13).

2. The Holy Place:

May we note that the place was holy. The Holy City was coming down from God out of heaven. It was prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. It was the holy city, the New Jerusalem which the apostle John visioned in heaven. It is "the Church of God in its new and perfect state," as one commentator has stated, and "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This is symbolic of the perfection of divine wisdom, holiness and of the church, ready for the full fruition of Christ in glory. This heavenly splendor of the Church of God, in its new and perfect state, is symbolic of a beautifully dressed bride ready to receive her husband. John says in Rev. 19: 7, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and

give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." This is a striking thought for us to consider seriously that we might be ready when God shall call us to answer for our deeds done in the body. Shall we be ready? Will he be able to say of us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, . . . enter thou into the joys of the Lord."

3. The Voice from Heaven:

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, verse 3a. Let us note first that the presence of God with the church is the glory of His Church. That is a wonderful thought. God has promised to be with his Children, his church, which is the bride of his Son. Christ as the Head of the church is the Chief Corner Stone. He is ever ready to guide each one who is a part of his Church in the way of eternal life. God will ever be with his people in heaven for them to share his presence and to rejoice with him. His people; that is, all the saved of earth, shall be his saints in heaven. There shall be perfect accord and harmony between him and his heavenly host, and they shall delight in experiencing his heavenly blessings granted unto them. Then they will be able to fully understand and appreciate his supreme love for them. They will be in perfect happiness with him.

The "still small voice" is constantly speaking today to men and women, boys and girls to heed God's call to them. It is pleading with sinful people to turn away from the Evil One, and to follow the path that Jesus trod. It is a call for repentance, faith and obedience. It is the will of God pleading with his wandering creatures to return unto him. It is the voice of the Son, saying, "Follow thou me." The purpose of the study of the scriptures is to acquaint the mind of man with God's will and way toward mankind, and to lead people to manifest

an implicit faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of lost souls. Students of the Sunday School lessons should be ready and willing to accept the teachings of the Bible and to appropriate its gospel truths to their own lives. They are not only to know the will of God toward each individual life, but they are also to be willing to abide by the great will. Herein lies the significance of the study of God's Word. The Apostle John says, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

4. All Tears Wiped Away:

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, verse 4a. This is a blessed thought. Former sorrows and disappointments shall be blotted out for ever. They shall know no weeping, no grieving over loved ones any more. Matthew Henry says, "They have been often before in tears, by reason of sin, of affliction of the calamities of the church; but now all tears shall be wiped away; no signs, no remembrances of former sorrows shall remain, any further than to make their present felicity the greater. God himself, as their tender Father, with his own hand, shall wipe away the tears of his children." How assuring are God's promises to his children! And how thoughtful people should be of God's love for them!

Note again, **There shall be neither death nor pain.** The sting of death they shall never witness again. The pain of mind, body and soul shall not trouble them any more. To them such former things have passed away. They are to be witnessed no more. God has removed them from his saints in glory. Here, again, is a wonderful thought for every student of the class to consider. Heaven and the joys of eternal life have taken the place of the agonies of death, and the pains of the body, the mind and the soul. But, remember only the children of God are promised these blessings.

Just the opposite will be the reward of doomed sinners. The human heart is to seek God and live, or to choose the ways of sin and Satan and die.

CLASS DISCUSSION: What are some of the views of the commentators concerning John's vision of the New Jerusalem? What comparison does the apostle give concerning the Church of God? What did the voice from heaven reveal? What voice should people heed today? What are God's promises to saints in glory? What effect should this study have upon every member of the class?

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE HOLY CITY (Rev. 21: 10-24)

The apostle John gives us in these verses the description of his vision of the Holy City, descending out of heaven from God, verse 10b.

1. The Compass of the City:

The wall of the city was made of jasper. Thus, it was built of precious stones for durability and lustre. It was four-square with the length as large as the breadth. "The measure of the wall, (vs. 15, 16): Twelve thousand furlongs each way, each side, which is forty-eight thousand furlongs in the whole compass, or fifteen hundred German miles. Here is room sufficient for all the people of God—many mansions in their Father's house."—M. Henry.

F. W. Boreham, a gifted expositor of the Word, has given some striking concrete illustrations of the size of the Holy City in the following manner:

"London covers an area of one hundred and forty square miles. But this city—the City Foursquare: It is 2,250,000 times as big as Adelaide (capital of South Australia). It is 15,000 times as big as London! It is twenty

times as big as all New Zealand! It is ten times as big as Germany and ten times as big as France! It is forty times as big as all England! It is ever so much bigger than India! Why, it is an enormous continent in itself. I had no idea of it until I went into the figures with my blue pencil here.... Working it out on the basis of the number of people to the square mile in the city of London, the population of the City Foursquare comes out at a hundred thousand millions—seventy times the present population of the globe!”

Note, the wall has twelve foundations (v. 14), which allude to the twelve apostles whose spiritual teachings are the foundations upon which the Church of Christ is built. These foundations are eternal and have Jesus Christ as the Chief Corner Stone.

2. The Gates, Angels and the Golden Street:

There are twelve gates which are representative of the twelve tribes of Israel. These gates mark the entrance ways of God's children in to the Holy City. As every tribe had entrance in to the earthly city of Jerusalem, so all true children of God will have entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem. The twelve angels, the glorious and heavenly guards, are placed at the gates to receive and admit all the redeemed of God into the Holy Place, and to keep out all others. There is no passing of the unredeemed through the pearly gates into the City Foursquare. They do not belong there. The inscriptions on the gates are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. This is to show that they have a right to the tree of life, and that they also have a right to enter into the Holy City through these gates to enjoy the heavenly bliss throughout all eternity. The street of the city is pure gold, (21: 21b). Let us observe that the saints of God will tread upon pure gold.

They will walk in holy converse with Christ, dressed in white robes, and upon the golden street which shall be free from all tarnish or blemish throughout all eternity.

3. No Temple There:

John saw no temple in the New Jerusalem, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, verse 22b. Although this City has no temple made with hands, that of Solomon and Zerubabel, it does have a temple both spiritual and divine—the Lord Almighty and his only begotten Son. They are the temple thereof. There shall be no need of any other temple for the saints of God. The whole City is a sanctuary, therefore, there shall be no need for a temple. There shall be no need of the sun nor the moon to give light, for the glory of God and of the Lamb will lighten the New Jerusalem. All that are redeemed in the blood of the Lamb shall walk in the light of the Son and of the Father during all eternity. “God in Christ will be an everlasting fountain of knowledge and joy to the saints in heaven; and if so, there is no need of the sun or moon any more than we here need to set up candles at noon-day, when the sun shineth in its strength.”—**Matthew Henry**. Spiritual light, not physical lumination of light giving bodies as man needs while upon earth, will be furnished by the Holy Trinity for all the saints in heaven. No light of illuminating bodies of earth and sky can equal this spiritual light, for the glory of God will be in it all. The whole of this glory in the New Jerusalem is based on the sacrifice of the atoning Lamb of God.

4. Some of All Nations There:

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, verse 24a. Some of all nations, kindreds and tongues shall have a part in this New Jerusalem. “There are to be neither race

boundaries, nor class distinctions; for gates are found on all four sides of the City, and men of every nation walk in its streets. These gates are never closed, for war has been abolished and the City will never be besieged. **The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it; the best that man can offer of gifts and talents, of knowledge or service, is gladly watched.**"—Tarbell.

The glory and honor of nations; that is, the redeemed ones from the different nations of earth, shall be admitted into the New Jerusalem. But there shall be excluded from it those who failed to walk in the light of God's counsel, and whose sins have not been blotted out in the blood of the Lamb. "There will be no sin, no vileness, no meanness, no false-

hood, no shame there. The only ones who shall enter are those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."—Dr. R. A. Torrey.

CLASS DISCUSSION: Discuss the size of the New Jerusalem as compared with the size of places on the earth. What reference is made of the twelve foundations of the wall? Describe the gates and the streets. Who were the twelve angels? Why does the New Jerusalem contain no temple? Who will be admitted in the Holy City?

FOR ADDITIONAL HOME STUDY: The Last Promise and Prayer of the Bible.—Rev. 22: 12, 20, 21; Jon. 21: 25; II Tim. 4: 8; Rom. 16: 20, 24; II Thess. 3: 18.



ILLUSTRATED TESTAMENT WITH PSALMS

*King James
(Authorized) Version*

Bold Self-Pronouncing Type
Printed on fine white Bible Paper

Specimen of type
WHAT shall we say then that
A'brā-hām our father, as per-
taining to the flesh, hath found?

Page size, $4\frac{3}{8}$ x $6\frac{3}{8}$ inches

FOR VEST POCKET OR PURSE

King James (Authorized) Version

Clear Self-Pronouncing Type

Printed on fine white Bible Paper

Specimen of Type
21 Howbeit this kind
goeth not out but by
prayer and fasting.

Page size, $2\frac{7}{8}$ x $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches

No. 25—Flexible, artificial leather binding embossed with Ecclesiastical design, round corners, red edges.....\$0.25

No. 34—Genuine Fabrikoid, overlapping covers, genuine gold edges, gold titles, round corners. Made in black, blue, brown and maroon.....\$0.50

No. 9—Genuine leather, overlapping covers, red under gold edges, gold titles.....\$1.00

POCKET TESTAMENT WITH PSALMS

No. 32P—Same binding and text as No. 34 but with addition of the Psalms.....\$0.60

No. 19PRL—Same binding and text as No. 9 with addition of the Psalms and WITH THE WORDS OF CHRIST PRINTED IN RED.....\$1.25

INDIA PAPER EDITION Without Illustrations

No. 44XP—Genuine leather, overlapping covers, round corners, red under gold edges, silk headbands, silk book-mark.....\$2.50

No. 47XP—Genuine levant morocco, overlapping covers, genuine leather lining, red under gold edges, silk headbands, silk bookmark.....\$3.50

16 beautiful full color illustrations of Biblical Subjects

No. 45P—Limp covers of genuine Fabrikoid, round corners, red edges.....\$1.00

No. 48P—Genuine leather, limp covers, round corners, red under gold edges.....\$1.50

LARGE TYPE TESTAMENT WITH PSALMS

*The ideal Testament for use in the home
King James (Authorized) Version
Large Pica Type, Self-Pronouncing
Printed on fine white Bible Paper*

Specimen of Type
THE book of the gener
Jē'sus Chrīst, the son of

Page size, $5\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 inches

No. 70—Stiff binding of waterproof cloth, round corners, red edges, gold titles, headbands, silk book-mark.....\$1.25

No. 72—Genuine leather, overlapping covers, red under gold edges, gold titles, headbands, silk bookmark...\$3.00

No. 70RL—Contents and binding same as No. 70 but WITH WORDS OF CHRIST PRINTED IN RED.....\$1.50

All of the above National Testaments are
fully guaranteed



HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.



SEP 91

N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962



